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NEW INTERNATIONALIST

Debt

A campaign comic



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● **The cartoonists' view of human rights.**

Photo: Stuart Franklin/Magnum



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This beautiful film, produced by the International Broadcasting Trust and Singing Nomads Productions, is the story of two remarkable Cambodian women who survived the Khmer Rouge holocaust and managed to regenerate the lost traditions of Cambodia's national dance. The film will be available on video after transmission on BBC2 on 20th May 1993 at 9.30pm accompanied by a colourful leaflet with background information and ideas for action.

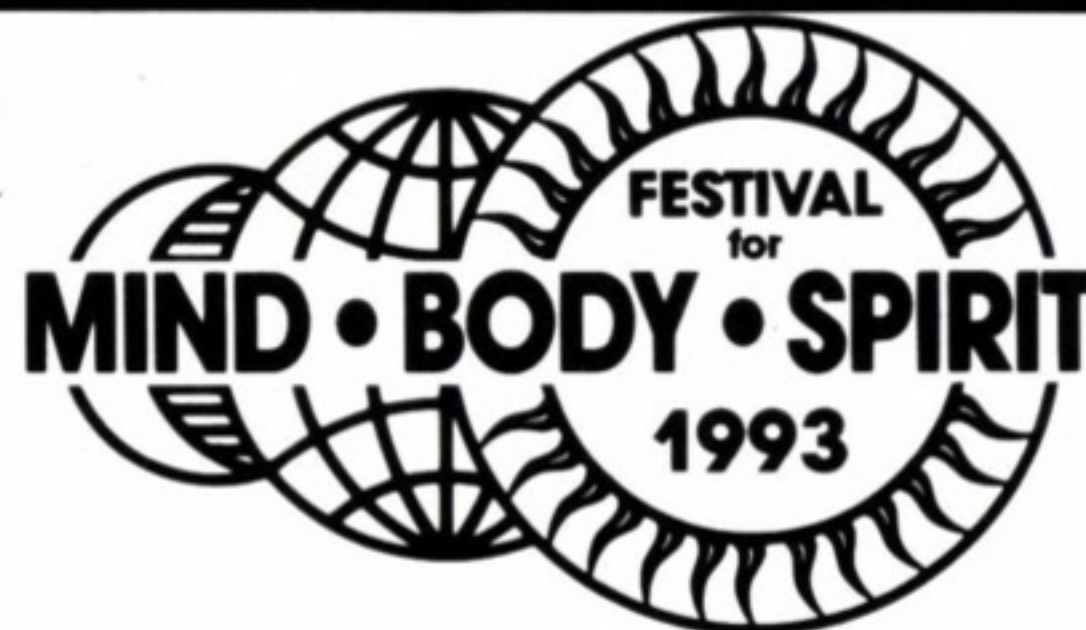
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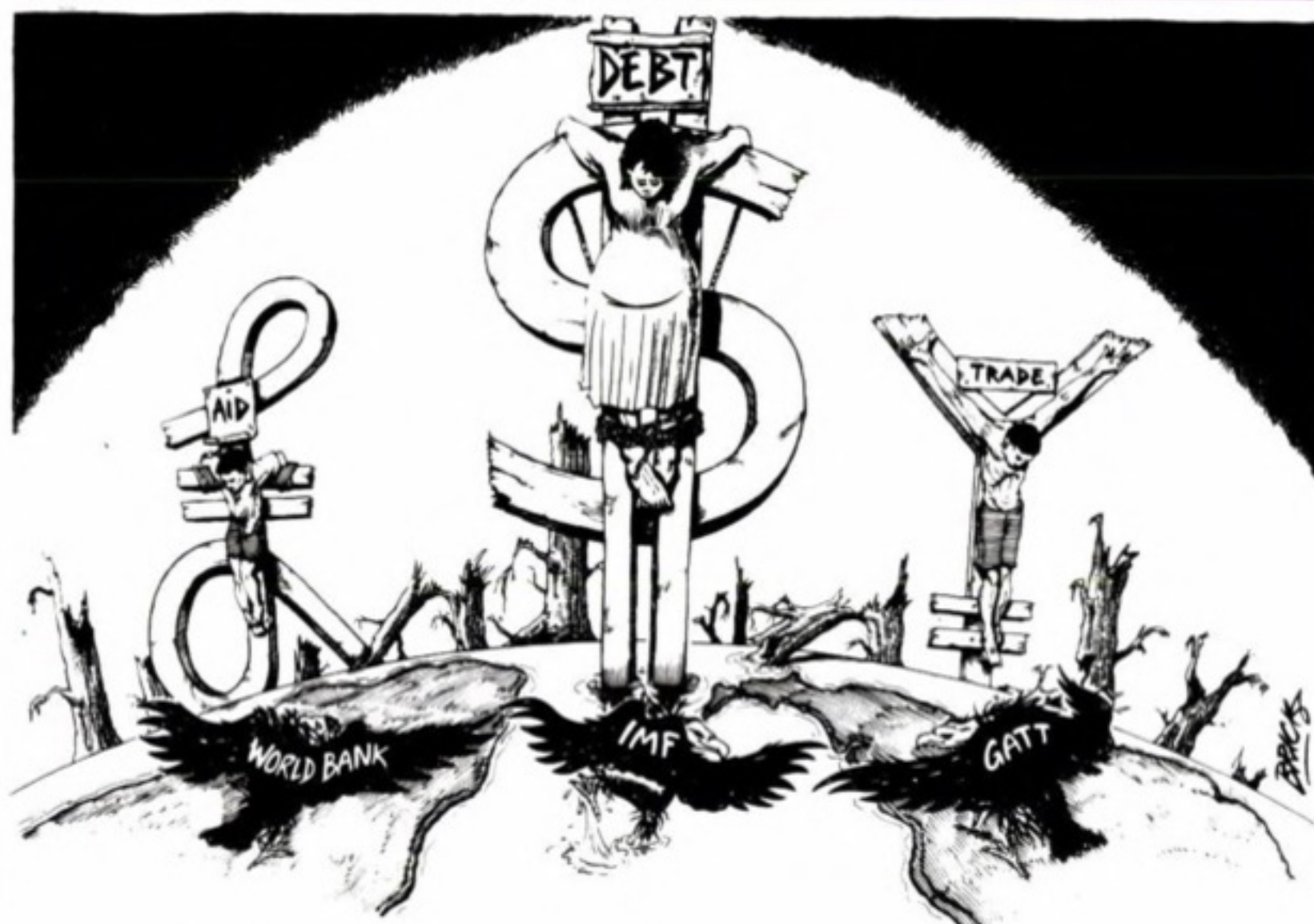
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THIS MONTH'S THEME

Debt

FROM THIS MONTH'S EDITOR

It was a hot summer's afternoon when cartoonist Brick dropped into the NI offices with examples of his work. He'd come from Third World First, the student campaign organization just up the road where the seeds of what was to become **New Internationalist** were first sown more than 20 years ago. Brick had been collaborating with them on a campaign against Third World debt and they had suggested he come and see us too.

We had not used his work before – and immediately wondered why not when he was so clearly on the same wavelength. He was doing with cartoons what we at NI try to do mainly with words and photographs – devising stimulating, imaginative and lucid routes into important, dense and complex subjects.

Debt is just such a subject. We know that it is probably the single most powerful cause of poverty and misery in the world today. And there is important and innovative research being done in this area. But how many of us rush to read the latest book on the debt crisis? And even if we do how many of our friends or relatives or students can we persuade to do the same?

That's where this month's NI steps in aiming to bring new, eye-opening ideas in a startling format that can be quickly understood and used in campaign or classroom. This comic – called *Alice in Latasica* – is largely inspired by the most recent work of radical economist Susan George, author of the Keynote in this issue of NI. She has produced 'the boomerang theory', which explains how Third World debt harms not only most people in the debtor countries but also most people in the creditor countries too.

It's a significant departure from the conventional wisdom that Third World debt is essentially a Third World problem from which the rich world profits. George argues that its effects rebound on most of us – encouraging unemployment, environmental collapse, crime and drug addiction, to name but a few. Such thinking can only help strengthen a growing global network of people's movements against debt and IMF-imposed structural-adjustment policies.

This comic pulls no punches. Brick does not speak in the euphemisms of the financial institutions – he exposes them in all their obscenity. *Alice in Latasica* should leave you with no doubt about the outrageousness of what is happening – and might galvanize you to take those bits of action you can take against this monstrous creation of the banking world.

And if you can't stand comics, well I'd urge you to give this one a chance. It might just convert you. And if it doesn't we'll be back with a more verbal approach next month and a special human-rights issue in collaboration with Amnesty International.

Meanwhile, welcome to Latasica – a mythical compound of Latin America, Asia and Africa – and may the trip be as illuminating for you as it was for Alice.

Vanessa Baird

Vanessa Baird

for the New Internationalist Co-operative

CONTENTS



Alice in Latasica

4

Things aren't altogether hunky dory in the home of Alice and Jack, your average couple living in your average town in your average recession-ridden country of the North. But when Alice starts talking back at walls things get strange... A campaign comic on debt in three chapters by **Brick**.

Pulp cookies

13

'About as nutritious as a fat lip – but they make you feel full.' Alice, who's fallen down a hole and landed in Latasica, savours a structurally-adjusted speciality and a few more distasteful realities like 'retro-development', the IMF, the World Bank and the ways of piranhas...

Sea of icebergs

19

The tips are big and bad enough, but what's underneath is worse still. Alice's Latasican guides break it to her gently, explaining the hidden connections between bankers, drugs, famine, war, multinationals and ozone holes. Losing her ignorance and finding her anger, Alice reaches the only conclusion a half-way sane individual could...

ACTION

25

'What the hell can I do?' asks Alice. We give a few suggestions.

Keynote: The debt boomerang

26

Susan George explains how the harmful effects of Third World debt come back to the North.



Letters

2

Letter from Lahore

3

Updates

29

Reviews: plus Billy Wilder classic

30

Curiosities

32

Endpiece: by Criselda Yabes

33

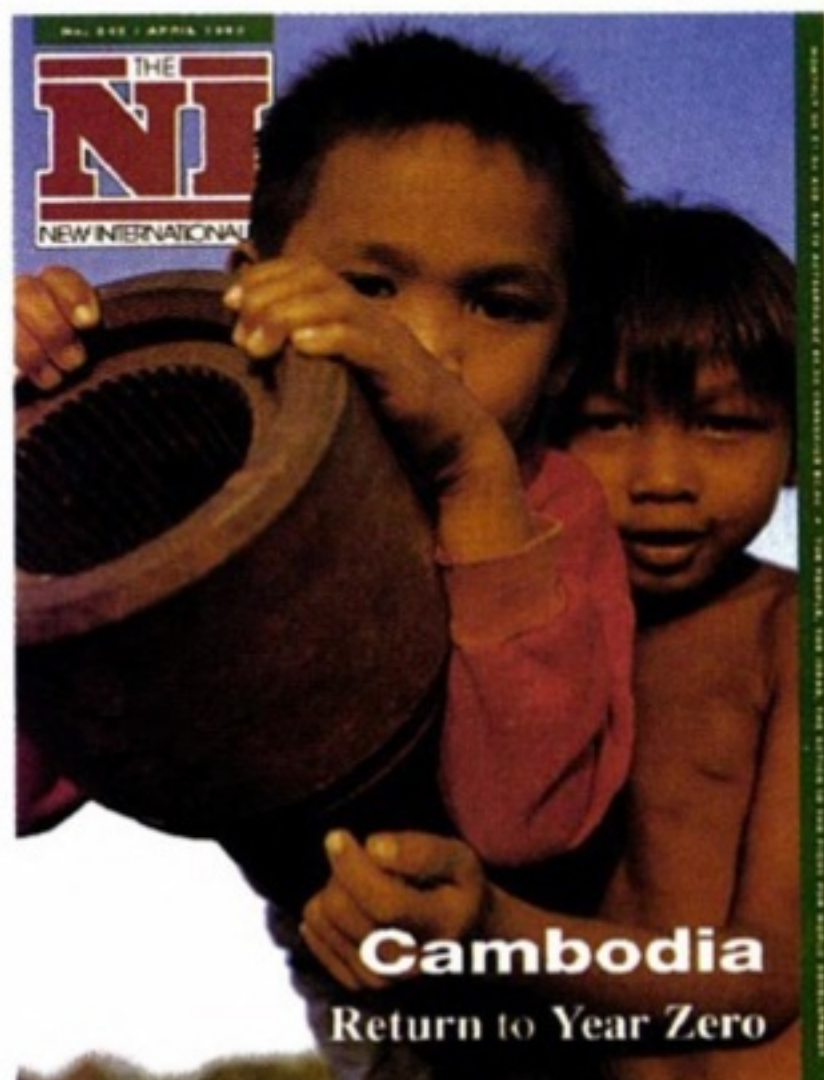
Country profile: Egypt

36

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH: THE IMF MONSTER, WITH ITS G7 HEADS, BY **BRICK**.

Conspiracy

Does John's Pilger's *Cambodia* (NI 242) mark the beginning of a new NI sport: UN-bashing? The UN may not be perfect, but it's doing a difficult job that deserves at least some recognition from your distinguished guest editor. It takes more than a conspiracy of the 'Great



Powers' to create a 'modern Hitler', let alone a self-styled socialist one like Pol Pot, and then arrange for his return. Condemned if it acts in Cambodia – and if it does not in Somalia – what the UN needs is constructive criticism from friends, not abuse from enemies with a sentimental attachment to the old regime in Vietnam.

Lilly Borg
Oslo, Norway

Left out

On reading the *Cambodia* issue (NI 242), I was very disappointed to see that no reference was made to World Vision's widely respected work in the country. World Vision has been associated with Cambodia since the early 1970s when we began assisting internally displaced people fleeing the civil war. With the fall of Phnom Penh to the Khmer Rouge the agency was forced to withdraw, but during the following four-year 'reign of terror' over 100 World Vision national staff lost their lives.

With the demise of the Khmer Rouge government in 1979 World Vision was one of the first agencies to be invited by the incoming administration to return and since then has spent more than \$30 million in helping the Cambodian people rebuild their shattered country,



The **New Internationalist** welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address is inside the front cover.

working closely with other agencies, notably Oxfam. That work has included assisting in the resettlement of refugees, resourcing the country's leading paediatric hospital, setting up primary health centres and supporting a number of agricultural development programmes. The agency has taken an active part in the current campaign to bring attention to the failures of the UN peace process, encouraging supporters in Britain to write to their members of Parliament on the issue. I hope that future coverage of this needy country will not ignore World Vision's contribution.

Peter Scott
World Vision UK

Bright and beautiful

I couldn't believe my eyes when I opened my NI 241. Such colour! It really brightened up the magazine. As usual, the content was excellent, informative, but certainly reading is made easier by colour photos and graphs.

Mike Kelly
London, UK

Murky motives

Of 8,000 abortions performed at one Bombay clinic 7,999 were female foetuses according to Shakuntala Narasimhan in her article 'The Unwanted Sex'

(*Girls and girlhood* NI 240). Put simply, the parents did not want these children. Was I shocked by the discrimination? Or did it raise a different question?

When I contemplate the statistics for England and Wales – 186,912 terminations in 1990, over 4 million since the 1967 Abortion Act – I wonder if our reasons for not wanting these children could be any less pernicious, to use the writer's words, than those in Bombay?

J Casey
Leeds, UK

Fairy tales

Readers may be interested to know that there is a collection of fairy tales containing positive images of girls (NI 240) – *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales* edited by Angela Carter and illustrated by Corinna Sargood and, of course, published by Virago (1991).

Nicola Harford
London, UK

Reader's challenge

I was appalled by the recent 'Country Profiles' on Israel and Indonesia (NI 239 and NI 240). For a supposedly 'progressive' magazine to virtually ignore the struggles of Palestinian, East Timorese and West Papuan peoples against colonizing powers like Israel and Indonesia

undermines any attempt at presenting a concise, critical analysis of those countries and betrays a disturbing lack of focus upon and commitment towards the rights of indigenous peoples to independence. Such reports serve to further marginalize peoples who already bear the effects of genocidal regimes and does nothing to challenge your readers to actively support their struggles for justice. I doubt whether any Palestinians would give Israel four stars for freedom. And as for the slaughter of 200,000 East Timorese, and the current trial of Fretilin leader Xanana Gusmao, NI remains totally silent.

Abdul Aziz Choudry
Ocaucani, Aotearoa/New Zealand

Image of hope

It was wonderful to see a breast-feeding mother whose breasts were full of milk, feeding a contented baby on the cover of your population issue (NI 237). As a breastfeeding mother myself, this picture was a particularly poignant image of hope for the African people.

Dr Karen Hillman
Gosnells, Australia

Misrepresenting maps

The comparison of your Peters Projection Map of the world and 'traditional' maps shows rank ignorance of the progress of cartography in the last 350 years.

The major advantages of Mercator's projection are that directions measured on the map are true and that linear scale is constant in all directions from any point. In the 1650s Sanson, in Paris, published Equal Area maps. These, by definition, allow direct comparison of areas. Thus different map projections are used for different purposes. Mercator maps are used for navigation and Equal Area projections for regional comparisons, and this choice has existed for more than three centuries. To suggest that Peters' excellent map provides a new answer to an old and deliberate colonial misrepresentation of truth is unforgivable.

John Murrell
Oxford, UK

Quiet word

With reference to your moving issue on *Girls and Girlhood* (NI 240), can I put in a quiet word for the many boys all over the world who suffer physically and mentally through not conforming to the male stereotype?

Angela Haward
Bristol, UK

One day Son, (say next week),
you will put away childish
things like skipping, pastel
colours and any emotions
except anger —
and become a MAN



Small fish

I would like to point out an error in Alfredo Forti's *Country Profile* of Ecuador (NI 238). Ecuador is no longer a member of OPEC, as he claims, but pulled out shortly after the inauguration of President Sixto. The reason for this was twofold: firstly, Ecuador was having to pay out huge sums of money merely to be a member of OPEC, and secondly, being just a small fish in a big pond, with oil production very low compared to Arab countries for example,

Kate Cory-Wright
Quito, Ecuador

Unimpressed

Nicola Gregory (*Endpiece* NI 238) presents an idyllic picture of the behaviour of travellers. She (and NI) must know that this is not the general experience that the rest of us have of travellers. They congregate and walk around the neighbourhood in intimidating-looking numbers, usually accompanied by lively-looking dogs (also intimidating to the nervous). Maybe we should be broader-minded and more confident, but we aren't. Maybe we should be glad to share the products of our labours with those who 'choose to live without petty rules and regulations', but we aren't. So travellers can expect to live at our expense, but they can't also expect us to like them.

Jean Davis
Oxford, UK

Firebombed

I have been handed a copy of your edition on Fundamentalism (NI 210) and I commend your magazine's foresight. Dealing with fundamentalism is a definite risk. Current victims run into the millions and this doesn't simply apply to deprived countries. Our own book shop here in Leeds was firebombed by Christian fundamentalists and one of our members had their property firebombed as well.

Martin Keane
Sub-Culture Alternatives Freedom
Foundation,
Leeds, UK

The views expressed on the letters page are not necessarily those of the NI.

LETTER from LAHORE

Learning to heal

Women in the villages of Pakistan have a lot to gain from literacy. But, writes Maria del Nevo, it's a bargain that's not always so easy to strike.

A GROUP of women from Maliwal gathered together in one of the village houses. Rush mats covered the mud floor and they squatted down with their books balanced on one knee; one or two nursed a baby on the other.

Younger girls began to arrive. They crouched down in the corner, huddled together, their chaddars (shawls) pulled tightly around their faces, their feet rough and dry from the long walk across the fields or through the muddy lanes of the village.

The women were gathering for a health education and adult literacy (HEAL) class, a special programme run by the Adult Basic Education Society in Lahore, which works in collaboration with 18 aid agencies in the villages of the Punjab.

With the literacy rate for women in Pakistan as a whole estimated at only 23 per cent and in villages like Maliwal at nil, one of the gravest problems is that they lack the knowledge and confidence to make use of the few health services that are available. With two-hour classes, six days a week, the first basic HEAL course focuses on nutrition, personal hygiene, sanitation, maternity and child care, common diseases, home nursing and family planning.

The village situation, though, can be extremely sensitive. It is the men who first have to be convinced that the courses will not corrupt the women or teach them 'city ways'. Then the women, too, have to be assured that what they learn will be directly related to their lives and the problems they face.

Maliwal is remote and situated far from the road, across dry, rough land. It is inhabited by fisherfolk and farmers. There is a distinct difference in status between the two. Many of the farmers live in pukka (proper) brick houses surrounded by high walls. The fisherfolk live in mud dwellings built along narrow lanes, where children sit and play beside open drains, women cook over dung fires in open yards or wash dishes at communal hand pumps.

The Maliwal project has had its fair share of difficulties. When classes began they stoked the fire of existing caste conflicts within the village.

'Many of our neighbours said "Look at those women, what are they doing?"' Mina, the local teacher, told me. 'They tried to cause trouble by gossiping, hoping that our husbands would stop us.' And sure enough some women do drop out.

Rashida had stopped attending classes. We walked across the fields to her house. It was one of the poorest in the village: four poles with a roof made of bracken and straw. Rashida was out but we spoke with her mother who sat on a *charpoi* (string cot).

'My son had been away in Lahore,' she told us, 'and when he came back he found that his sister was going to classes. He was angry, spoke to his father and they stopped her from going again.'

Mina tried to encourage the woman to persuade her husband and son, but she shook her head. 'They say she doesn't need an education and they think that when she goes into the village that she is meeting a boy there,' said the woman. 'I have tried everything. It's useless.'

The use of visuals is a new method thought up by HEAL. The women are encouraged to discuss any health issue and then draw a sequence of pictures which tells the complete story; in this case how a baby suffering from diarrhoea didn't recover because the family brought in the local faith healer who just breathed over his head. The story is discussed and questions raised as to how the diarrhoea was caused in the first place and what could have been done to save the child.

In this way a new, positive story is formed and the women are asked to draw it in another sequence of pictures.

The hope is that once the women have learned about the prevention and cure of such common illnesses they will pass on the message to other women of the village who are unable to attend the class. It costs between \$25 and \$50 to make one person literate – a tiny amount considering how much self-esteem, confidence and knowledge someone can gain from learning to read.

Mina, the teacher, is already realizing the possibilities for change. All the women nod in agreement as she speaks out. 'We have learned the importance of education, and all those neighbours who criticized us for attending the classes will one day see what we have achieved. They will see how we live and how we bring up our children... We want to learn more and more so that we can improve our lives... and so that we can find out what is going on in the world.'

Maria del Nevo is a former NI staff member who now lives and works in Lahore.



MIRIAM MCCURDY



THE 1980s WERE SO PROMISING. OKAY, THEY STARTED A LITTLE SHAKY, BUT BY THE END OF THE DECADE...

WE WERE DOING ALL RIGHT. HAD THOUGHTS OF STARTING A FAMILY. SELLING UP, GETTING SOME PLACE 'BIGGER. THE COLD WAR WAS OVER.

LIFE WAS CALMER. WE WERE, WELL... SETTLED. COMFORTABLE. KNEW WHERE WE WERE GOING.

THEN IT ALL WENT WRONG. THE COUNTRY SLID INTO RECESSION. UNEMPLOYMENT WAS NO LONGER A STRANGE WORKING-CLASS DISEASE. WE WERE NOT IMMUNE.



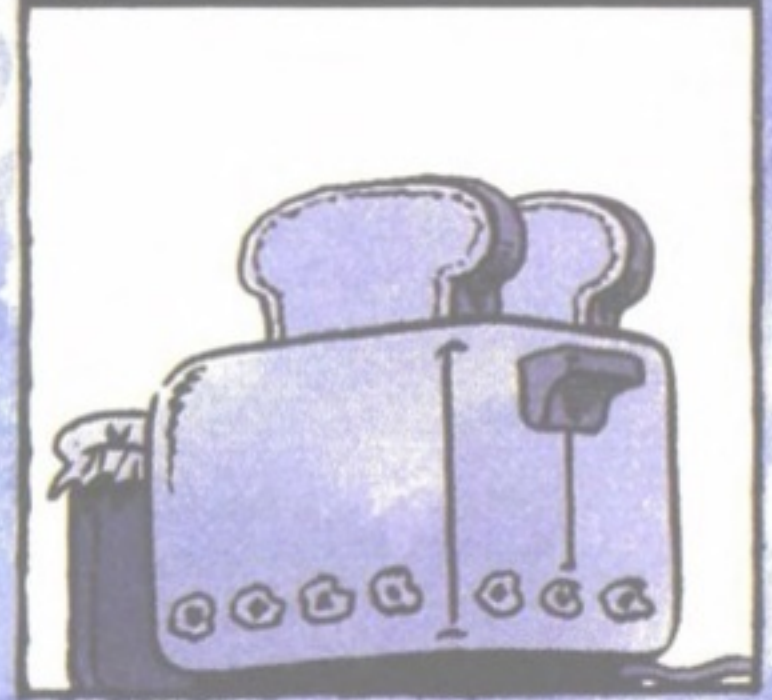
HE LOST HIS JOB. THEY CALLED IT 'DESIZING'. I TOOK A WAGE FREEZE. THE BOTTOM FELL OUT OF THE HOUSING MARKET WHO'D HAVE BELIEVED IT?



WE CUT BACK. CANCELED SUBSCRIPTIONS. SOLD THE FREEZER. WE COUNTED THE PENNIES AND PAID AS WE WENT.



HE TRIED TO SET UP ON HIS OWN. FREE-LANCE. BUT IF THERE'S NOT THE WORK ABOUT...



NUTZ! THE BANK'S PULLED THE PLUG ON OUR OVERDRAFT.

D'YOU WHAT!?

TWO MONTHS AGO.



AND THERE'S ANOTHER REMINDER. WE'RE ABOUT TO DEFAULT ON OUR MORTGAGE.



OK, WE'LL TALK WHEN I GET BACK. ALREADY LATE FOR THE WELFARE.



WE'RE IN TROUBLE, JACK.

I KNOW. COULD BE AS MUCH AS TEN GRAND!



Alice in Latasica



JUST ONCE I'D LIKE TO START THE DAY WITHOUT BEING REMINDED I OWE THE WORLD + HIS WIFE AN ARM + A LEG!

OH LALA! YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT PROBLEMS!?



SORRY, JACK?

DOWN TO YOUR LAST BMW, OR AM I PITCHING TOO HIGH?



JACK? ARE YOU STILL THERE?

YOU WANT TO TALK MONEY PROBLEMS? TRY ONE TRILLION DOLLARS!



TRUE, IT'S HALF THE SIZE OF THE USA'S NATIONAL DEBT, BUT UNLIKE YOURS + THEIRS, IT'S NOT OF OUR OWN MAKING.

WE GOT SUCKED IN BY YOUR BANKS. OUI, AND OUR LEADERS.

THE ENTERPRISING EIGHTIES, REMEMBER, WHEN MONEY MEN CONQUERED THE WORLD WHILE POLITICIANS COVERED THEIR FLANK.

NOW YOU PAY, EH? SISTER, WE'VE ALWAYS PAID!

ONLY NOW WE PAY IN FLESH + BLOOD, STONE + SOIL, FLORA + FAUNA. WHAT ELSE IS LEFT?

WHOW!

AAAAH!



OWHI!

ALORS, SO THERE YOU ARE!

WELCOME TO THE SOUTH, TO LATASICA.

LAND OF SAND, SEA + EXOTIC AD LOCATIONS

WHERE MOST FOLK THINK A COCKTAIL IS THE ASS END OF A CHICKEN... THE PARSON'S NOSE... MEAT!

SOMETHING THEY DREAM ABOUT.

WHERE PARADISE IS A DAY NOT SPENT LOOKING DOWN THE BARREL OF AN AUTOMATIC.



OHH!

DAMN!

WHAT THE...!?



BIENVENIDO A LATASICA

AND WHERE ALL YOU SURVEY IS IN HOCK TO YOUR NORTHERN BANKS FOR LIFE!



I'M SORRY. I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

COURSE YOU DON'T, SISTER. THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE. TO MEET GENERAL ALI ARAP RIPOV.

JAIL

MAY I INTRODUCE
OUR EX-DICTATOR.

BUT...

YOWSER! I'D SEEN THE MOVIES, WORN
THE T-SHIRT, LIVED UNDER COLONIALISM.
I WANTED FLASH CARS, BIG HOUSES,
BOOMING BUSINESS, MEGA
INDUSTRIES...

I JUST WANTED
TO BE LIKE YOU,
BOO, HOO...

THINGS WERE
TOUGH FOR
LATASICA
DURING THE
EARLY YEARS
OF OUR
INDEPENDENCE.
THEN THE PRICE
OF OIL ROCKET-
ED IN 1973 AND
IT GOT REAL
TOUGH.....
EVEN FOR
YOU LOT!



SUDDENLY I HAD BANKERS FALLING
OVER THEMSELVES TO MAKE ME AN
OFFER I COULDN'T REFUSE.

A FREE CADILLAC
WITH EVERY LOAN.

REAL EASY INTEREST
RATES PLUS A FLEET
OF CADDIES!

SHINE YOUR SHOE FOR
YOU GENERAL? NO
OBLIGATION...

WHAT DO
WE DO WITH
IT?

INVEST IT, BOZO,
AND LIVE OFF THE
INTEREST!

GO SOUTH,
YOUNG
PIRANHA.

BANK IT, BOZO, AND
LIVE OFF THE INTEREST!

Y'MEAN Y'DON'T WANT TO
CHECK MY CREDIT RATING
OR HOW I'M GONNA
SPEND IT?!

WOULDN'T DREAM
OF DOUBTING YOUR
INTEGRITY, OLD CHAP...



NOT WHEN YOU'VE GOT SUCH AN ENDEARING
WAY OF KEEPING YOUR PEOPLE IN LINE...



BESIDES, WHO'S
EVER HEARD OF
A COUNTRY
GOING BROKE,
WHAT!?



SOME JOKE, HUH....

JEEH. MY BANK CHECKS
YOUR BLOODCOUNT AND CRAWLS
THROUGH YOUR KNICKERS DRAWER
BEFORE LENDING A BIRO!!

AAH, HAPPY DAYS.
WE CAME BEARING
BULGING BRIEF-
CASES....

AND LEFT A
LITTLE HEAVIER!

..WITH WHAT'S
CALLED FLIGHT
CAPITAL

PARDON?

PAYOLA, KICKBACKS,
BRIBES DESTINED FOR
HIGH INTEREST
OVERSEAS
ACCOUNTS.

**FOLLOW
THE BUCK!**

BE MY FRIEND.

THE ELITE.

ARMS.

**CORRUPT NATIONAL-
IZED INDUSTRIES.**

**PRESTIGE
PROJECTS**

TAXES

THEN THERE WERE THE
TOYS FOR THE BOYS...

HEY! A DICTATOR'S
GOTTA PROTECT
HIMSELF.

I'M
NOT
TAKING
IT ANY
MORE

**CAN I HELP
YOU!?**

BESIDES, I BUILT THINGS.

HE DID! 260 STATUES OF
HIMSELF DICTATING FOR
STARTERS.

USEFUL THINGS!

LATASICA HIGHWAY. IT FED INTO A
BUSH TRACK...

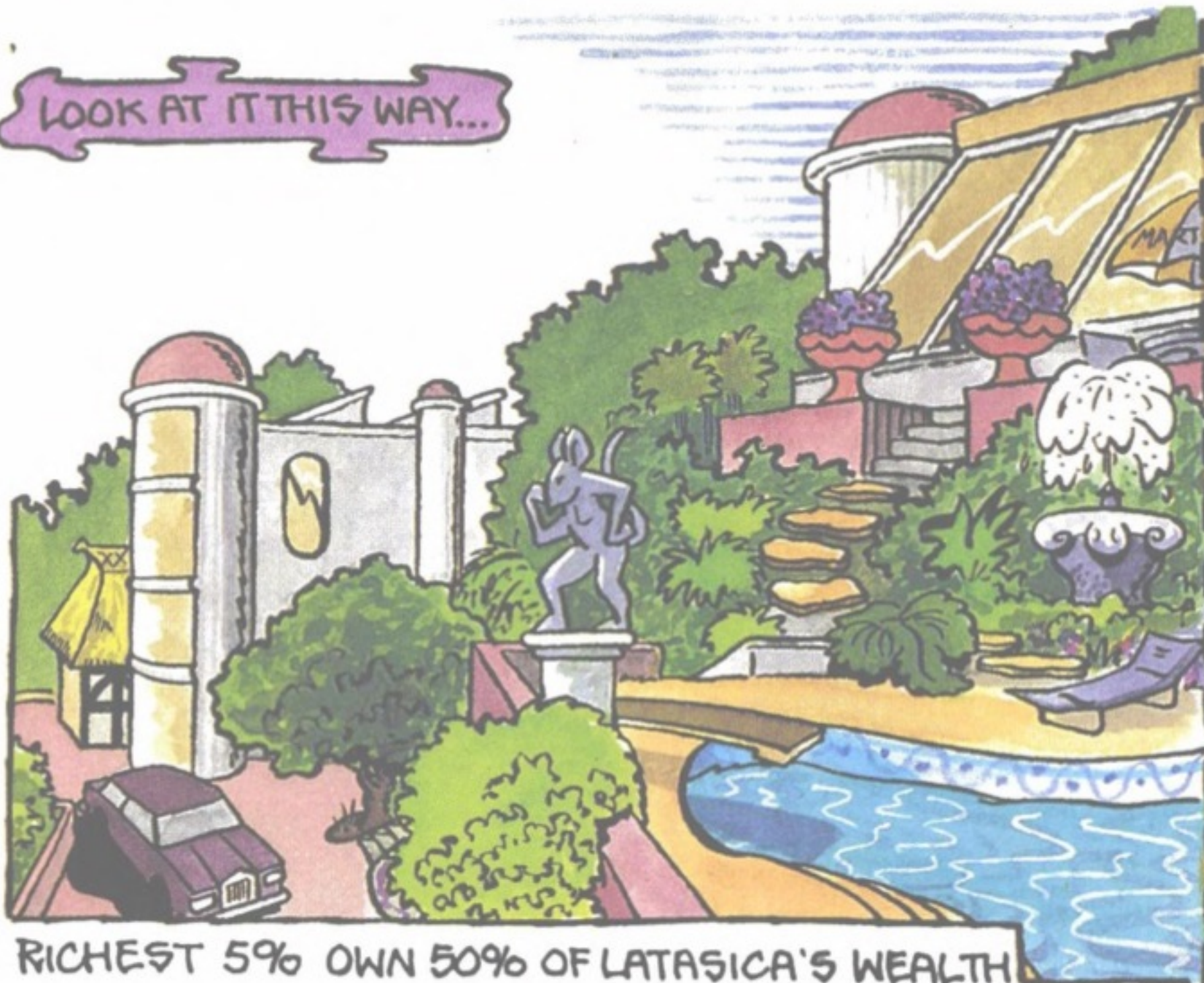
LIKE A PROCESSING PLANT FOR OUR STATE SUGAR COMPANY, BUILT
BY HIS BROTHER ON HIS UNCLE'S LAND FROM AN OVER PRICED
GERMAN KIT IMPORTED BY HIS DAUGHTER'S HUSBAND WITH A BIT
MISSING. 20 YEARS ON, IT STILL IS....

\$74B CAME ROLLING IN. \$5B ACTUALLY
REACHED OUR PEOPLE. MANUEL HERE GOT
ALL OF A \$10 BAG OF SEED.

THAT'S DREADFUL.

NON, C'EST CRIMINAL!

LOOK AT IT THIS WAY...



RICHEST 5% OWN 50% OF LATASICA'S WEALTH



POOREST 50% OWN 5% OF LATASICA'S WEALTH

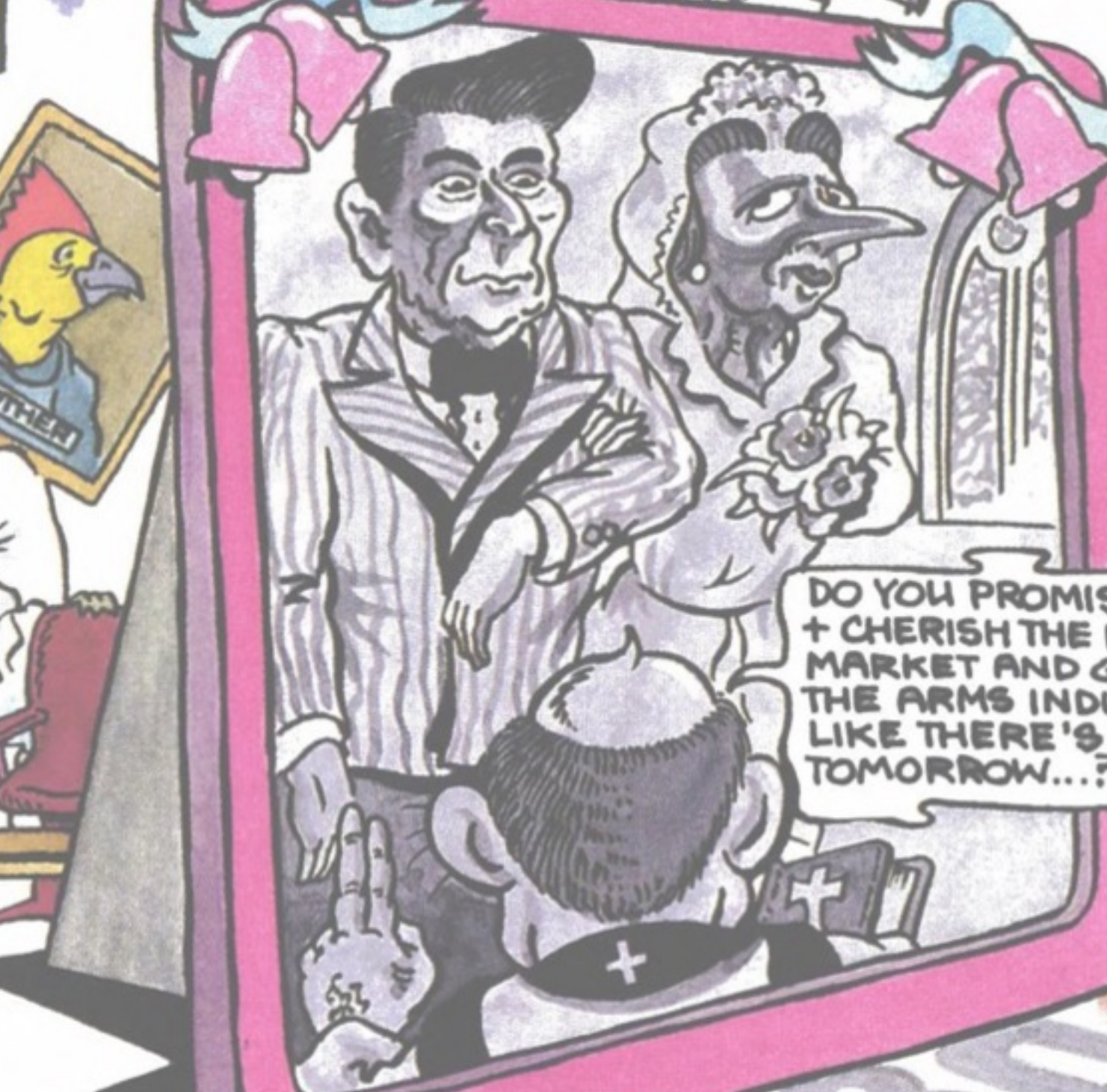


WE THREW AN UPRISING! VERY POPULAR. EVERYBODY CAME. RIPOV WENT...



THERE WERE A LOT OF CHANGES...

BUT NOT JUST IN LATASICA.



\$1 LENT NOW COST HALF AS MUCH AGAIN TO BORROW. EASY MONEY FOR FISH!



\$81a Barrel
\$12a Barrel
\$37a Barrel



SO FIRST WE HAD TO SELL MORE TO EARN THE SAME, THEN WE HAD TO SELL MORE OF MORE BECAUSE IT WAS WORTH LESS. THEN WE HAD TO SELL MORE OF MORE MORE BECAUSE WHAT WE BOUGHT IN COST MORE, MORE, MORE AND MORE!!

COULDN'T YOU PROCESS XYZ YOURSELVES AND THEN...

SI! BUT HOW DO WE GET THE HARD CURRENCY TO BUY THE MACHINERY.

...AND WHEN WE DO WE GET HIT BY TARIFFS!

TEESH, YOU REALLY GET A RAW DEAL.

YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE HALF OF IT....

BUT IF YOU CAN'T EARN THE CURRENCY...?

WHAT CAN YOU DO...?

You DEFAULT ON YOUR INTEREST REPAYMENTS... LIKE OUR FRIENDS IN MEXICO.

Stereotype Pictures PRESENT

FRIDAY 13th

AUGUST 1982

MAD MEX WIELDS AXE OVER PIRANHA PROFITS

BANCO MEXICO

CAN'T PAY! WON'T PAY!!

LATASICA FOLLOWS SUIT...

Stereotype Sequels

FRIDAY Part II

(THAT AFTERNOON)

IN THE NORTH, THE BANKS HAVE A HEART ATTACK....

\$ · Dm · £ · ¥ ·

WHAT!!? (CROAK)

DUR-DUR DUR-DUR

AND THE WORLD MONETARY SYSTEM RUSHES TO RESERVE A SPACE ON THE WINDOW LEDGE OF THE 14TH FLOOR.

WE'RE BANKRUPT!

WHOSE IDEA WAS IT TO LEND MORE THAN WE'VE GOT IN OUR RESERVES...?

AAAH!

ENTER THE I.M.F.

ON LOAN TO THE

IMF

WHO?

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND.

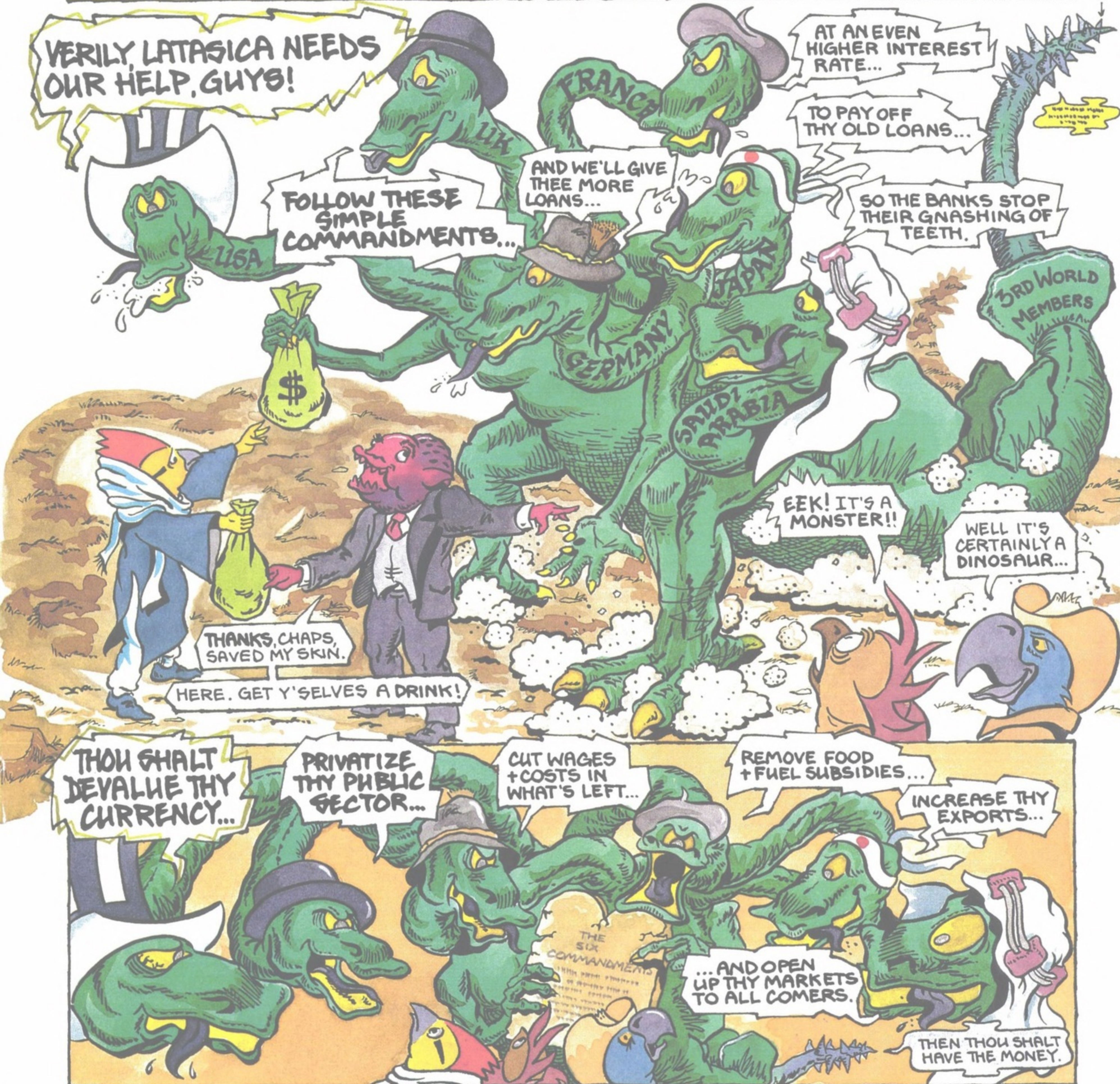
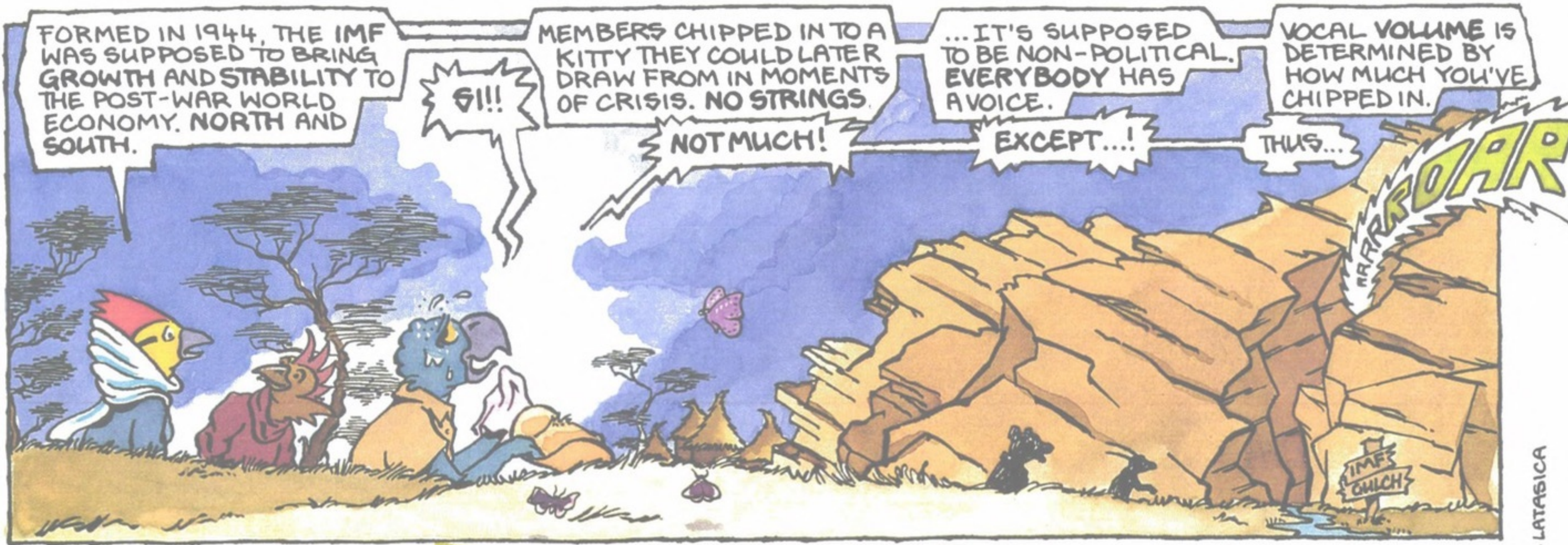
AKA THE INSTITUTE FOR MISERY AND FAMINE.

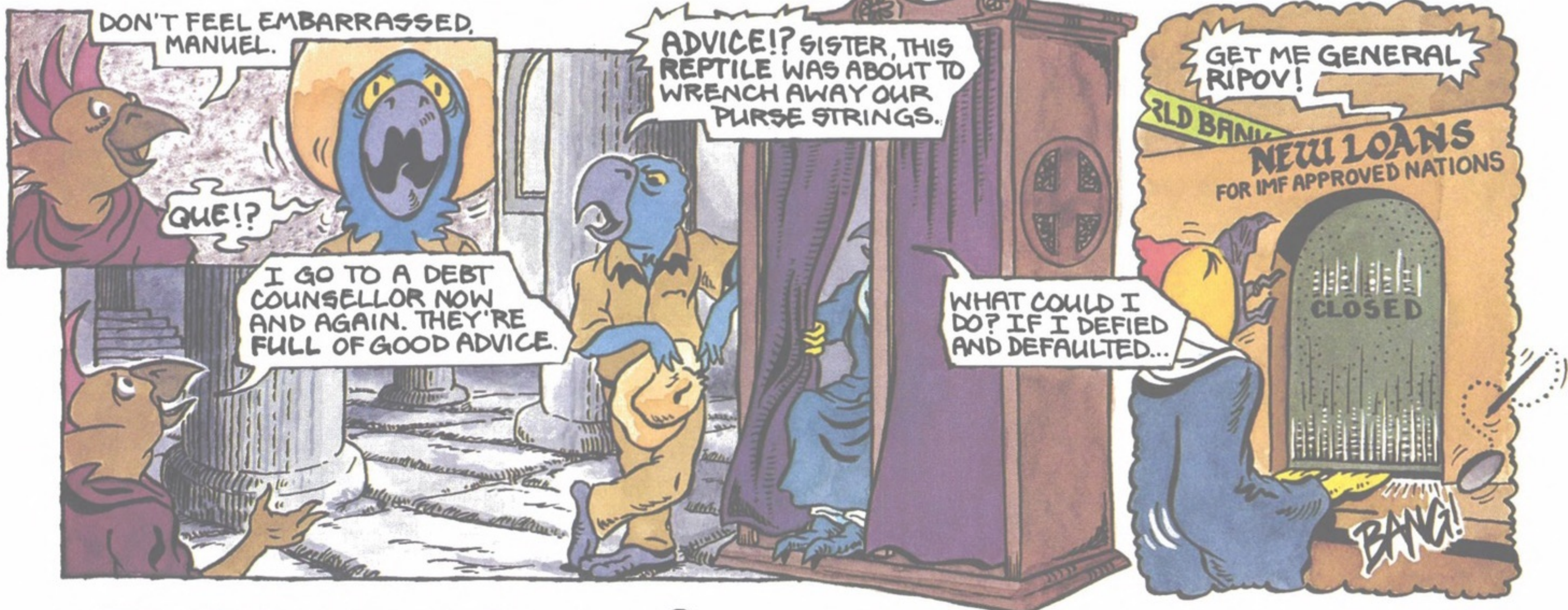
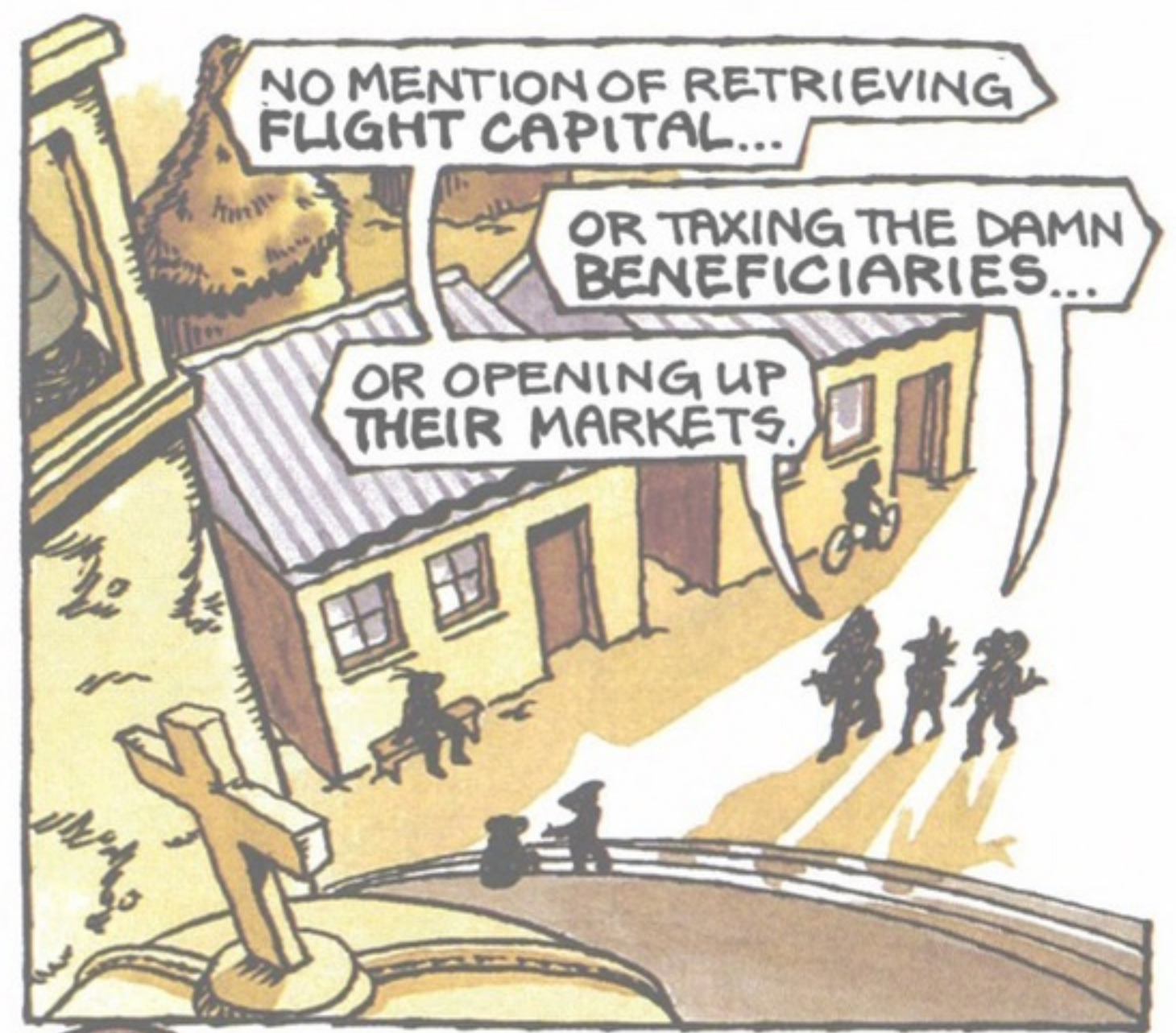
IT'S A RICH MAN'S CLUB

WHICH THEY BEAT OVER THE HEADS OF THE POOR!

WEE!

BOING!





WE DESPERATELY NEEDED CASH. WE NEEDED A COUP D'ETAT LIKE A GAZELLE NEEDS A PARACHUTE.

DOST THOU REALLY NEED TWO FOR EVERY 3 MILLION PEASANTS?

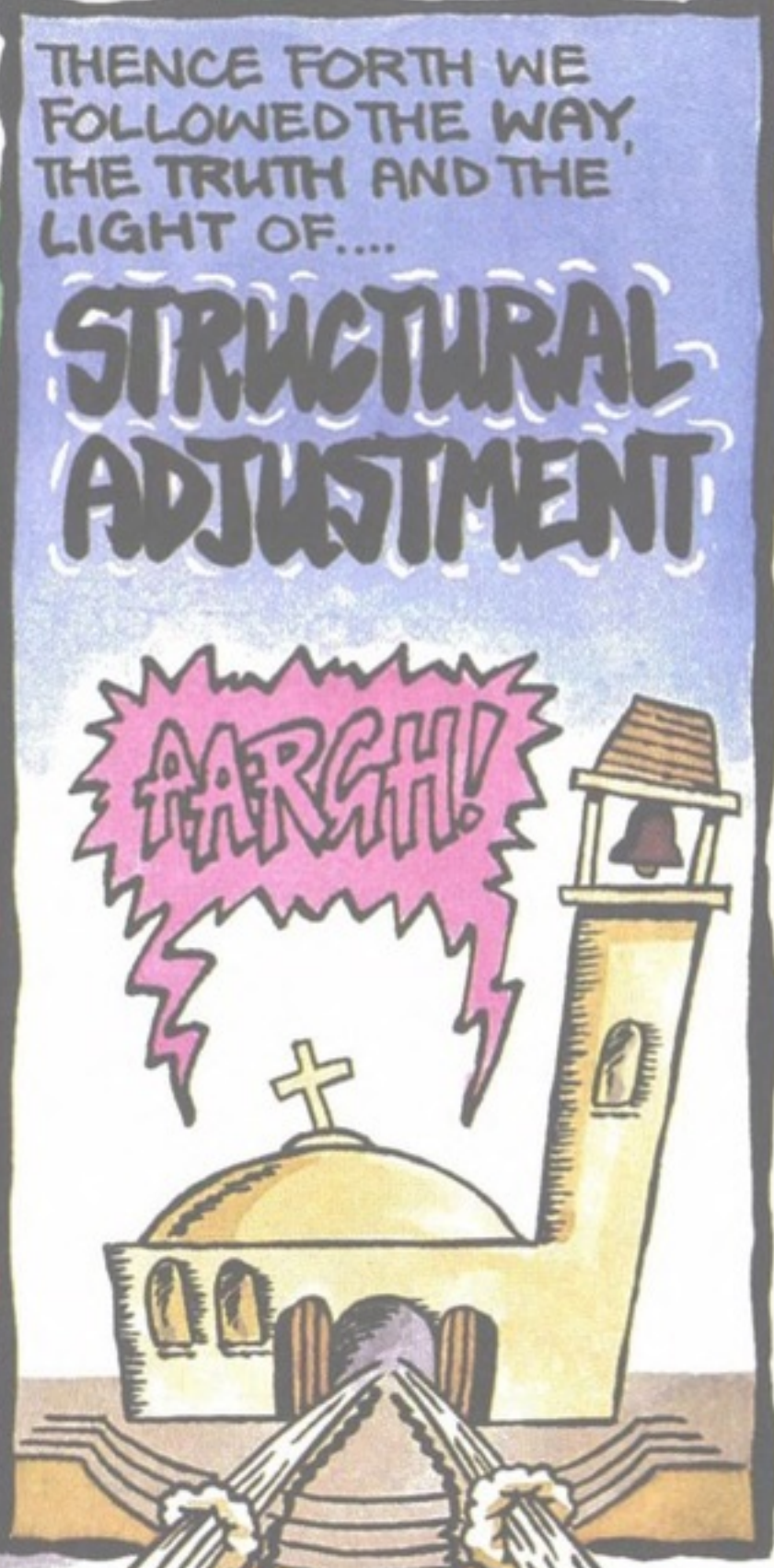
THEREFORE I BOW UNDER THE MILLSTONE OF YOUR APPROVAL, OH MIGHTY MEDDLER.

THAT'S THE IDEA...

NOW, ABOUT THESE HOSPITALS...

Ministry of Finance.

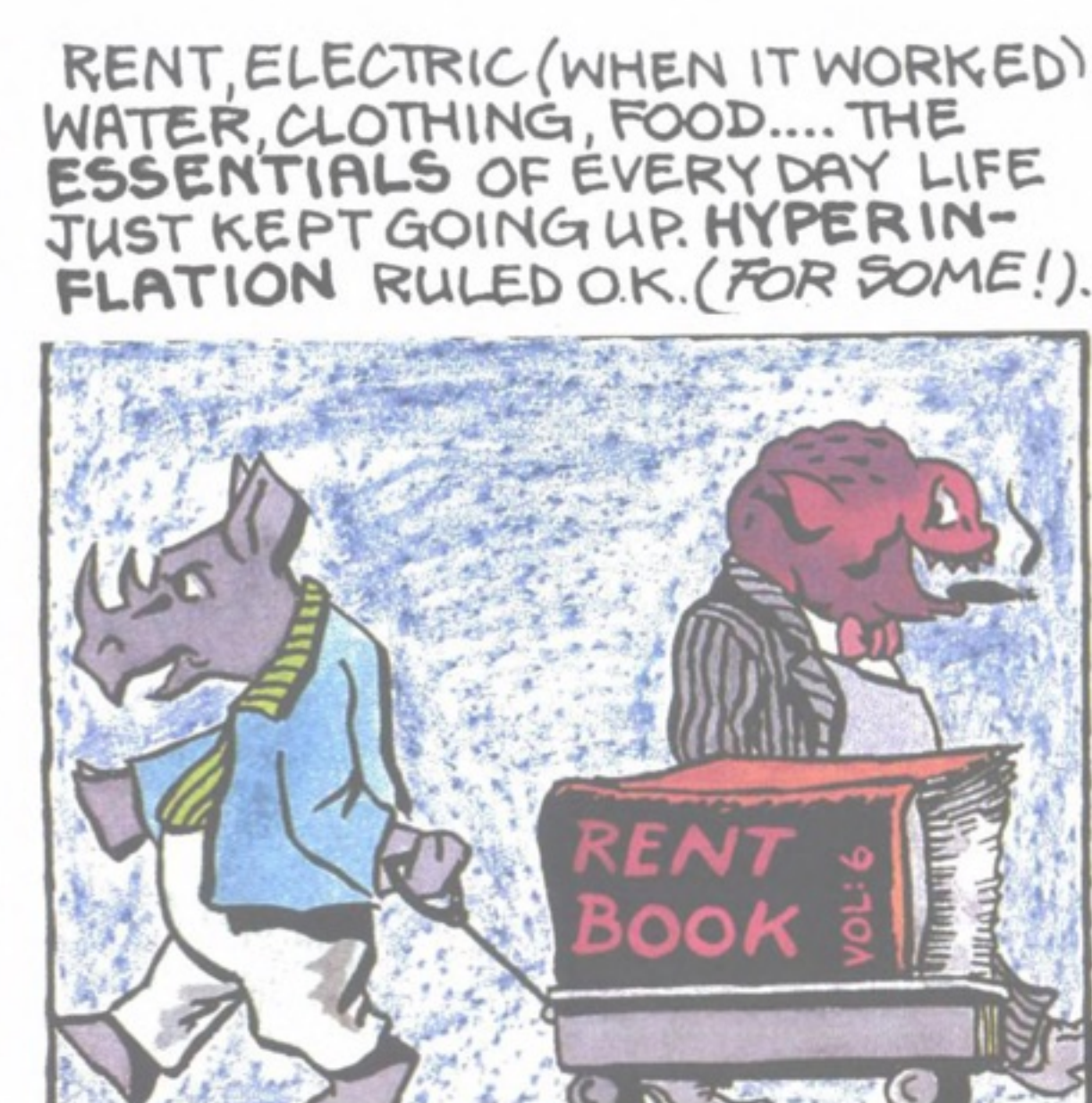
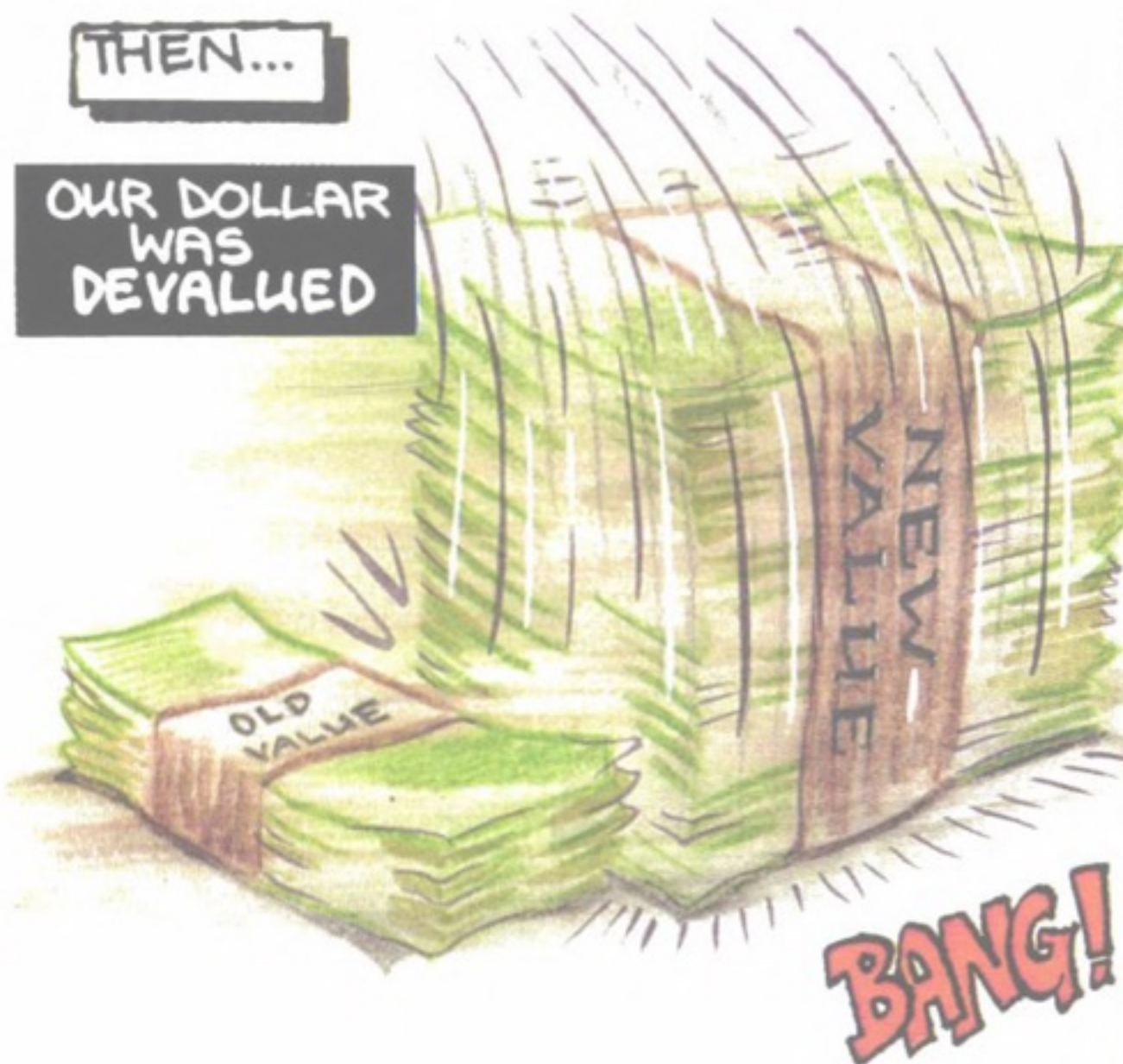
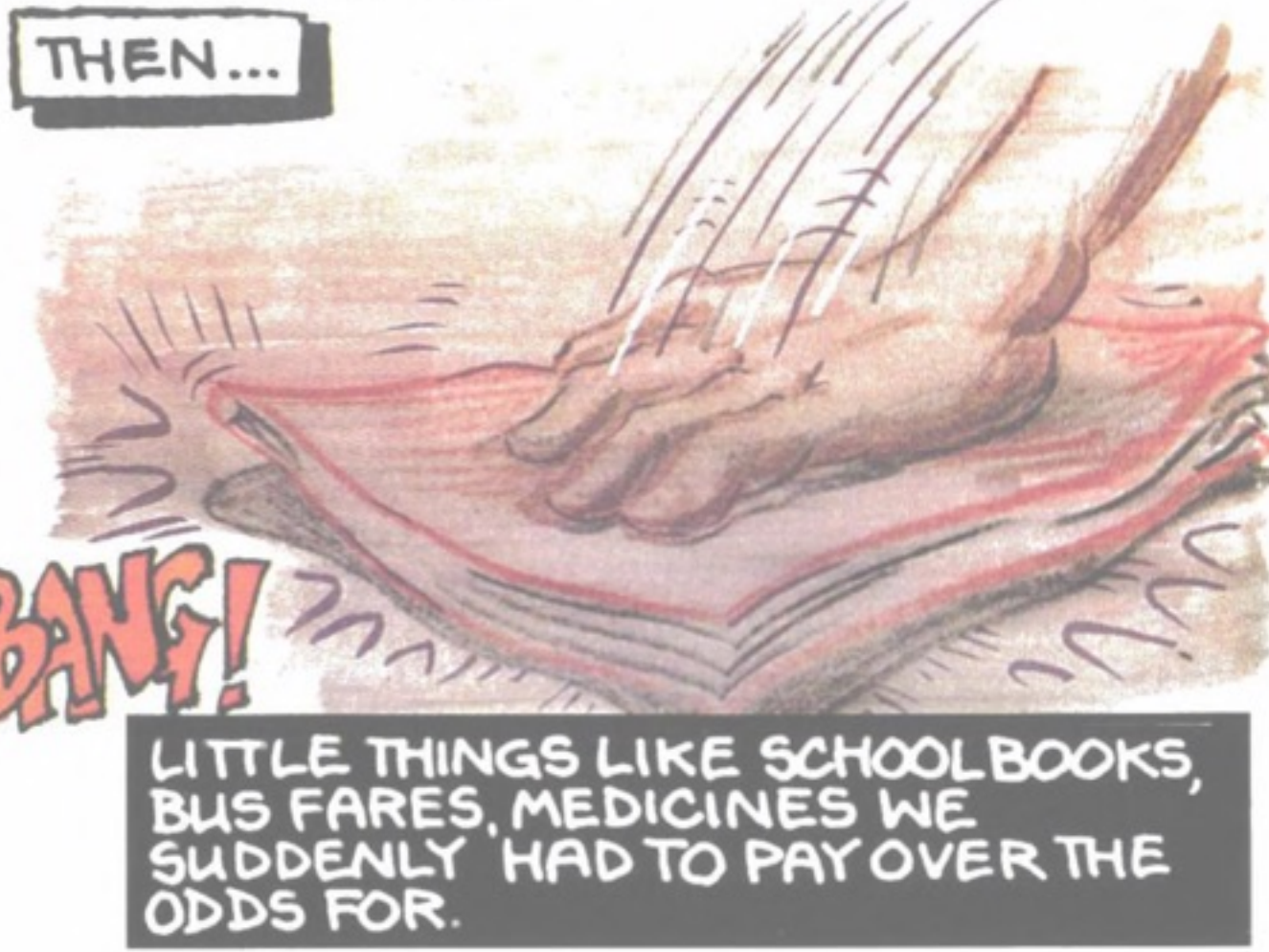
CLOSE ONE AND THOU WILT MAKE A SAVING OF.... LET ME SEE...



FOR SALE
ONE MINISTER OF FINANCE

APPROVED

Pulp cookies





WE DID HAVE FANCY FURNITURE ONCE. I HAD TO SELL A LOT OF STUFF. THINGS THAT HELD MEMORIES.

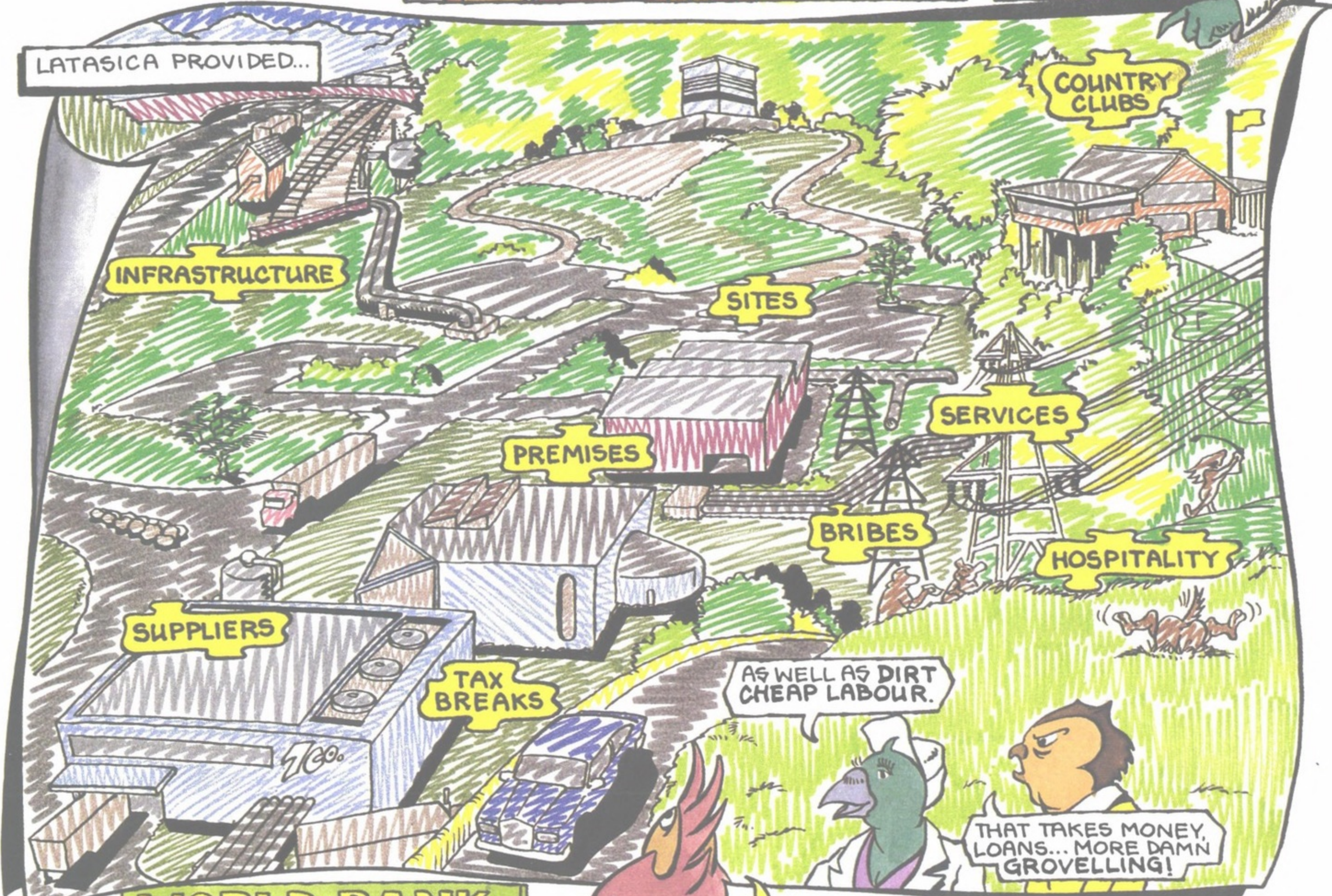


POURQUOI? WELL, KHADI GOT HIT BY A DRIVER RUNNING THE LIGHTS WHERE SHE WORKED.



THE OLDER KIDS CARRIED HER TO THE LOCAL CLINIC..





WORLD BANK FOR IMF APPROVED NATIONS

THIS SHOULD SMOOTH THE WAY FOR MY COLLEAGUE TO MOVE IN, WHAT...



WORLD BANK?

YEH, NOT A COMMERCIAL BANK, LIKE NORTHERN BANKS INC. A DEVELOPMENT BANK FUNDED BY DEVELOPED NATIONS, LENDING TO DEVELOPING NATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO HELP US, ER.... DEVELOP.

RESULT.... RETRO-DEVELOPMENT. NOW THERE'S A WORD.

MEANING?



MEANING THAT TO GET THE NEW LOANS, I HAD TO PUT THE FINAL IMF COMMANDMENT IN PLACE.

SHE WITHDREW ALL FOOD AND FUEL SUBSIDIES.

FOR FOLK LIKE ME AND SUKI, IT WAS THE FINAL STRAW

OTHERS HAD TO START EATING STRAW

OR PULP COOKIES...

IF IT'S A SAINT'S DAY...

GREAT WAY TO RUN A DEMOCRACY, EH? BOTH ARMS TIED BEHIND MY BACK, A MILLSTONE AROUND MY NECK AND MY OWN PEOPLE KICKING ME IN THE CONSTITUTION.

MORE LOANS! FOR TEARGAS AND WATER CANNON.

WHATEVER ELSE WE MIGHT SAY ABOUT RIPOV WE WERE BETTER OFF THAN UNDER THE IMF'S CLAW.

NEXT ELECTION WE VOTED IN A COMPANY MAN, HARVARD TRAINED.

SOUNDS LIKE ANARCHY.

JULIUS TALKED BANK SPEAK. WE FIGURED HE MIGHT GET A BETTER DEAL.

HE COULDN'T DO WORSE.

SO WE THOUGHT...

WE'D ALREADY SACRIFICED OUR FUTURE ON THE ALTAR OF DEBT REPAYMENT.

OWI, PILLAGE OUR NEEDY TO FILL THE VAULTS OF YOUR GREEDY!

HANG ON! WHAT ABOUT THIS!!?



SACRE BLEH! WE CAN'T EVEN SELL OUR OWN PRODUCE TO OUR OWN PEOPLE.



BUT HE DOES HAVE A POINT. WE'VE ALL GOT TO PAY OUR DEBTS.



AND WE HAVE! SEVERAL TIMES OVER! TELL HER, CARLA...

\$28B MORE HAS GONE FROM LATASICA TO THE NORTH THAN VICAVERSA.



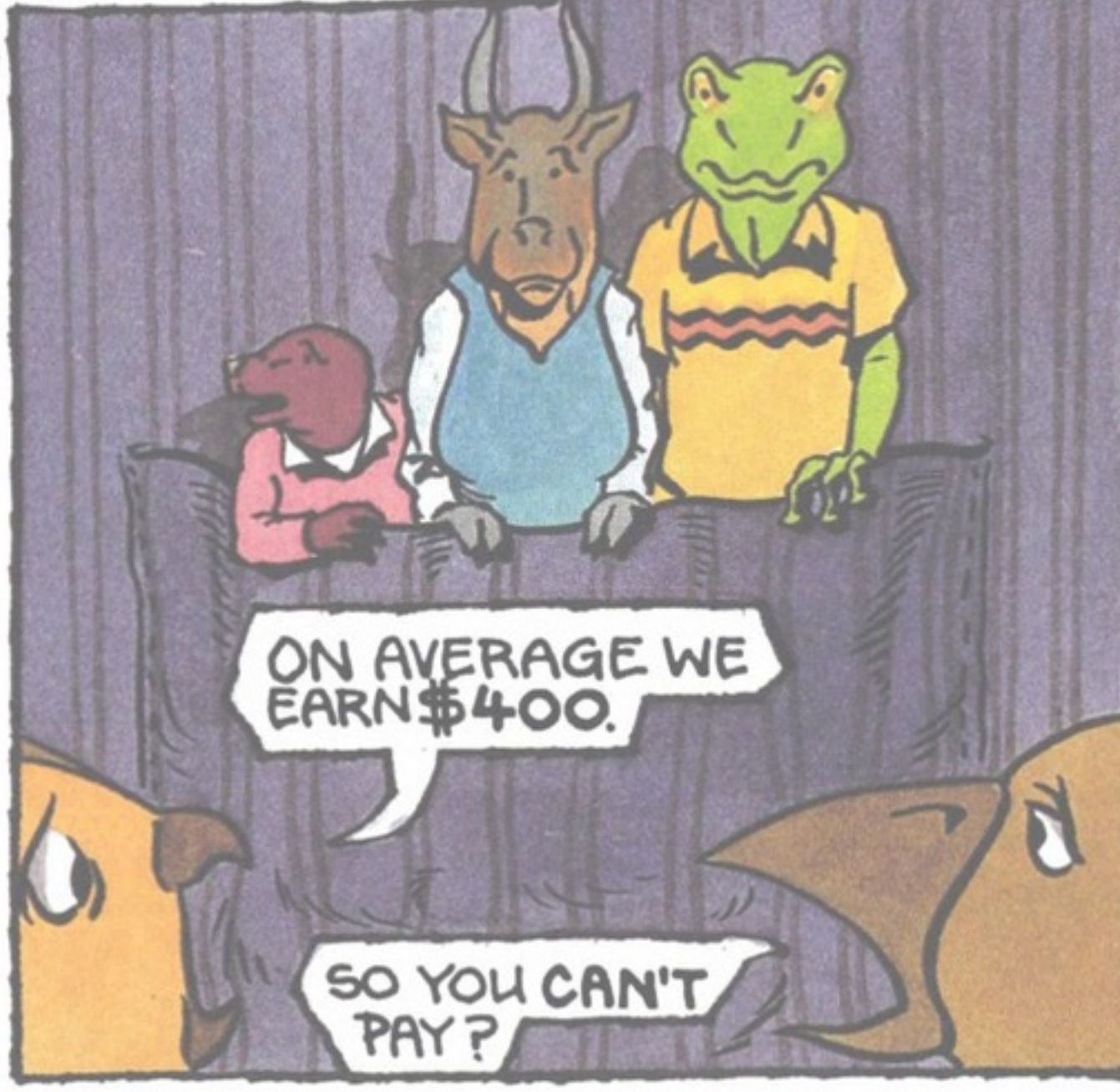
WE SPONSORED YOUR BOOMING 1980S.

44% OF OUR NATIONAL SPENDING GOES ON PAYING OFF INTEREST JUST THE INTEREST.

FORGET THE ORIGINAL LOAN! LOST IN THE MISTS OF TIME...



EVERY MAN, WOMAN + CHILD IN LATASICA OWES THE NORTH \$700 PER YEAR.



IT'S A BIT LIKE...

EXCEPT IT'S WORSE!



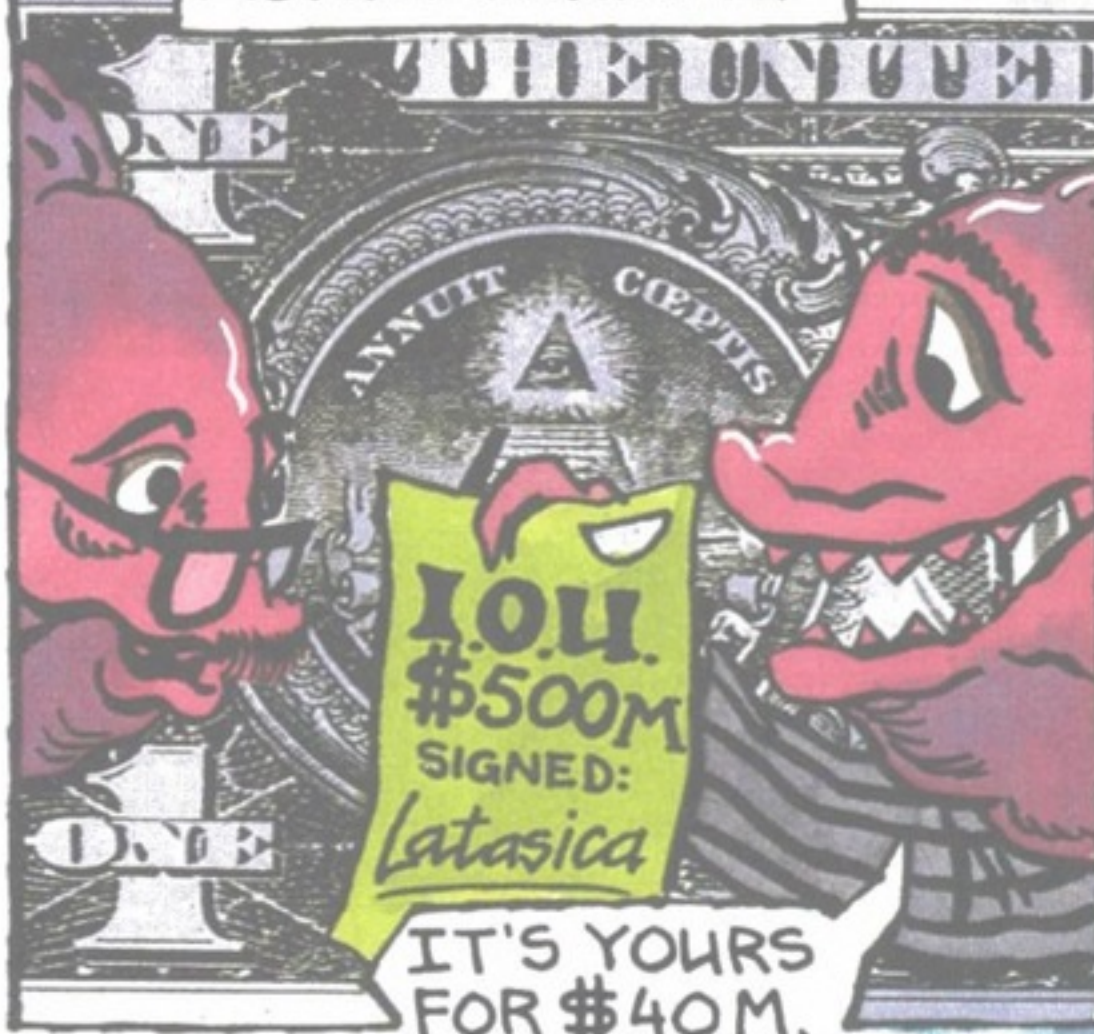
Sea of icebergs



NORTHERN BANKS INC. SAYS TO YOUR TAX INSPECTOR...

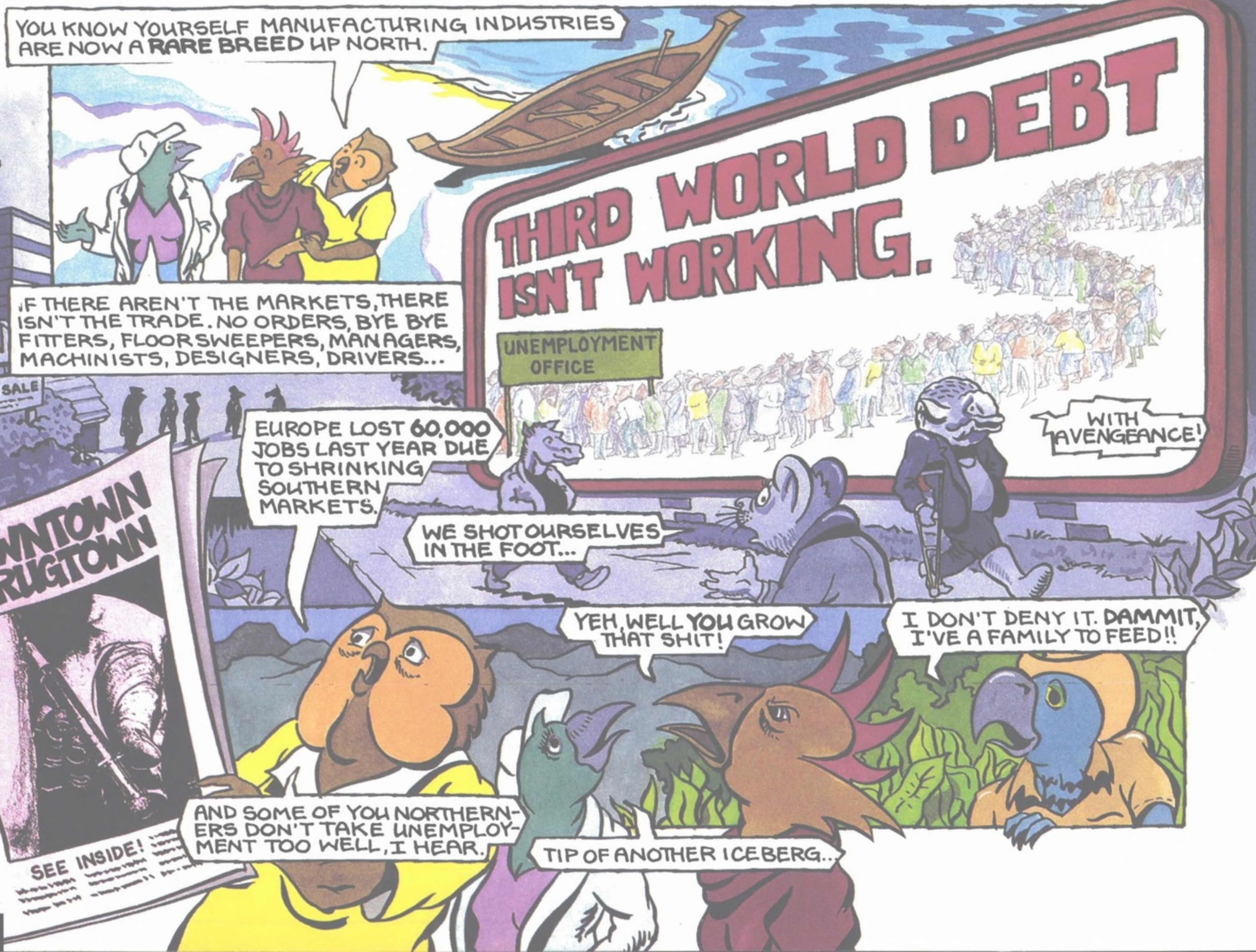
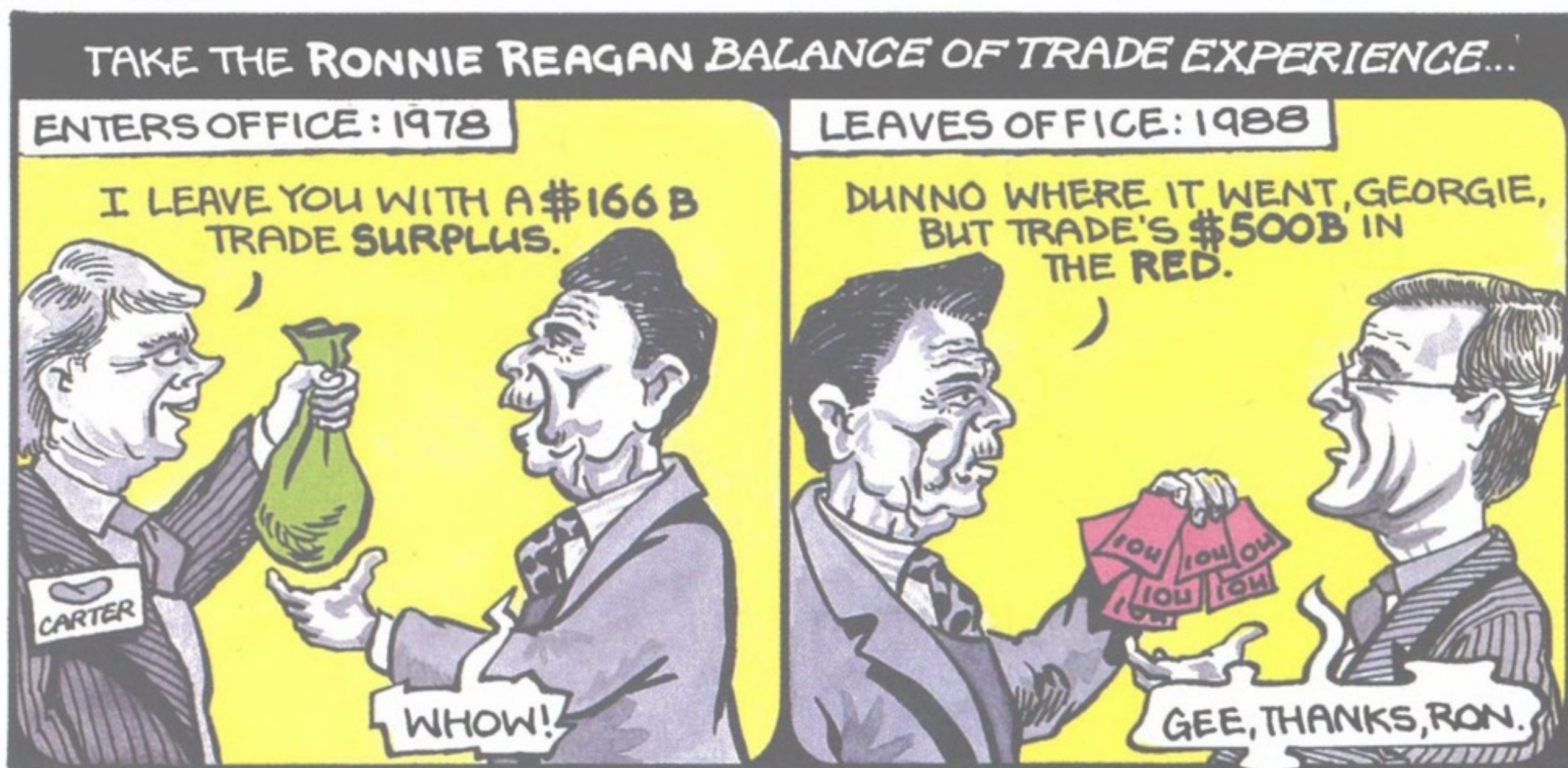


FOR EXAMPLE, THEY PLAY PONTIUS PILATE BY SELLING OUR DEBTS ON AT A DISCOUNT TO A MONEY CHUMMY.



BY THE TIME WE'VE REPAID THE LOAN, THE MONEY CHUMMY STANDS TO MAKE OVER 1,000% PROFIT!!





SEE, ONLY Y GROWS ON THIS LOUSY HIGHLAND. A GOOD YEAR WILL EARN US \$ 150 TOPS.

COULDN'T BUY A ROTAVATOR FOR THAT.

ON THE OTHER HAND, COCA LOVES IT UP HERE AND PAYS TEN TIMES THE PRICE.

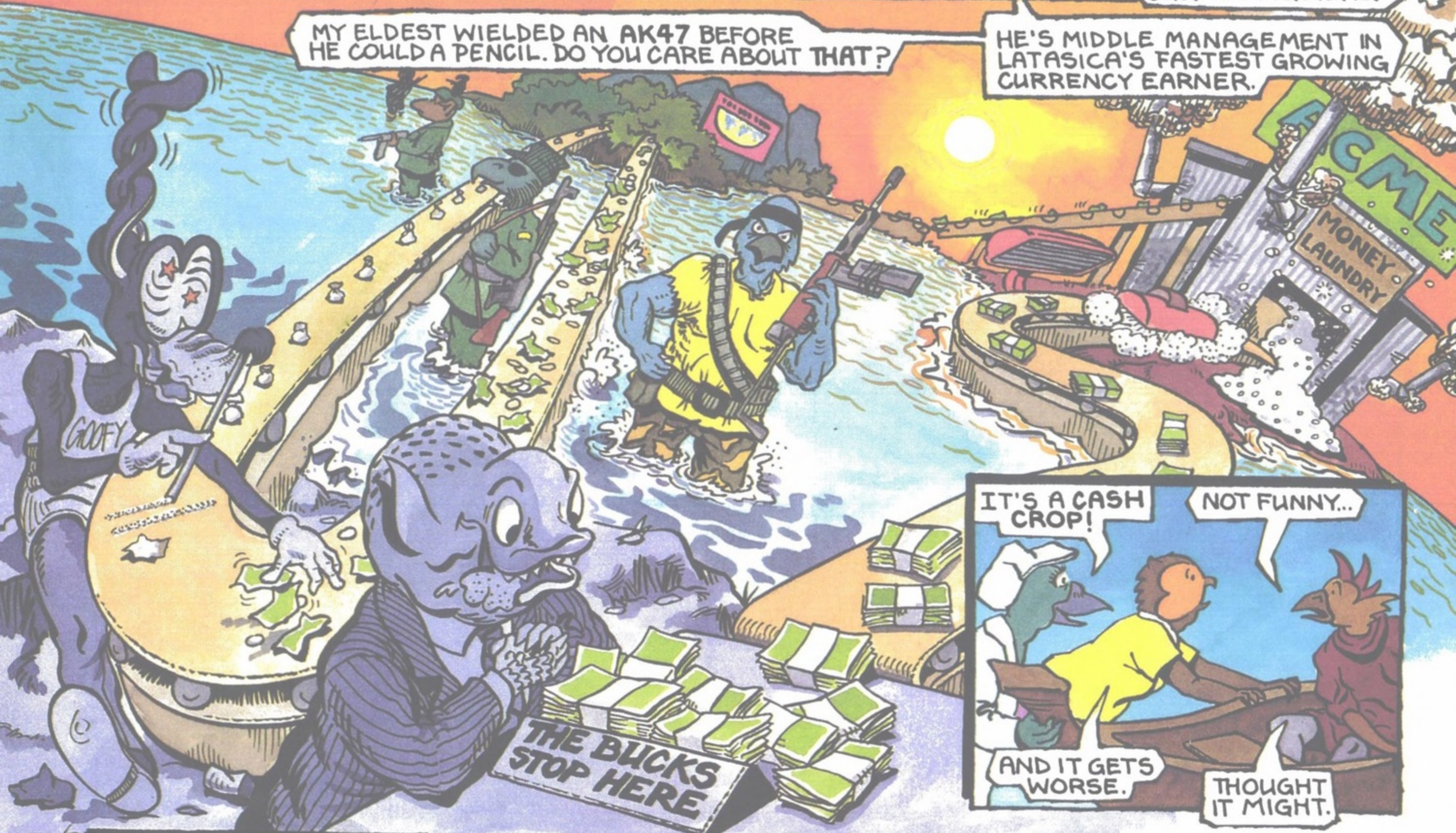
WHICH WOULD YOU GROW?

BUT DON'T YOU CARE? ...THE CONSEQUENCES ...THOSE POOR KIDS...

I COULD ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION ABOUT OUR YOUNGSTERS.

MY ELDEST WIELDED AN AK47 BEFORE HE COULD A PENCIL. DO YOU CARE ABOUT THAT?

HE'S MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN LATASICA'S FASTEST GROWING CURRENCY EARNER.



IT'S A CASH CROP!

NOT FUNNY...

AND IT GETS WORSE.

THOUGHT IT MIGHT.

FOR THREE YEARS, NATIVE ICAS HAVE FOUGHT TO PREVENT DRUG BARONS MOVING IN ON THEIR LAND.

PRESUMABLY THE ICAS HAVE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT?

WELL YES THE NORTH PAYS ME TO TAKE ON THE BARONS...

AND NO WE CAN'T AFFORD TO STOP THE FLOW OF NARCO-BUCKS.

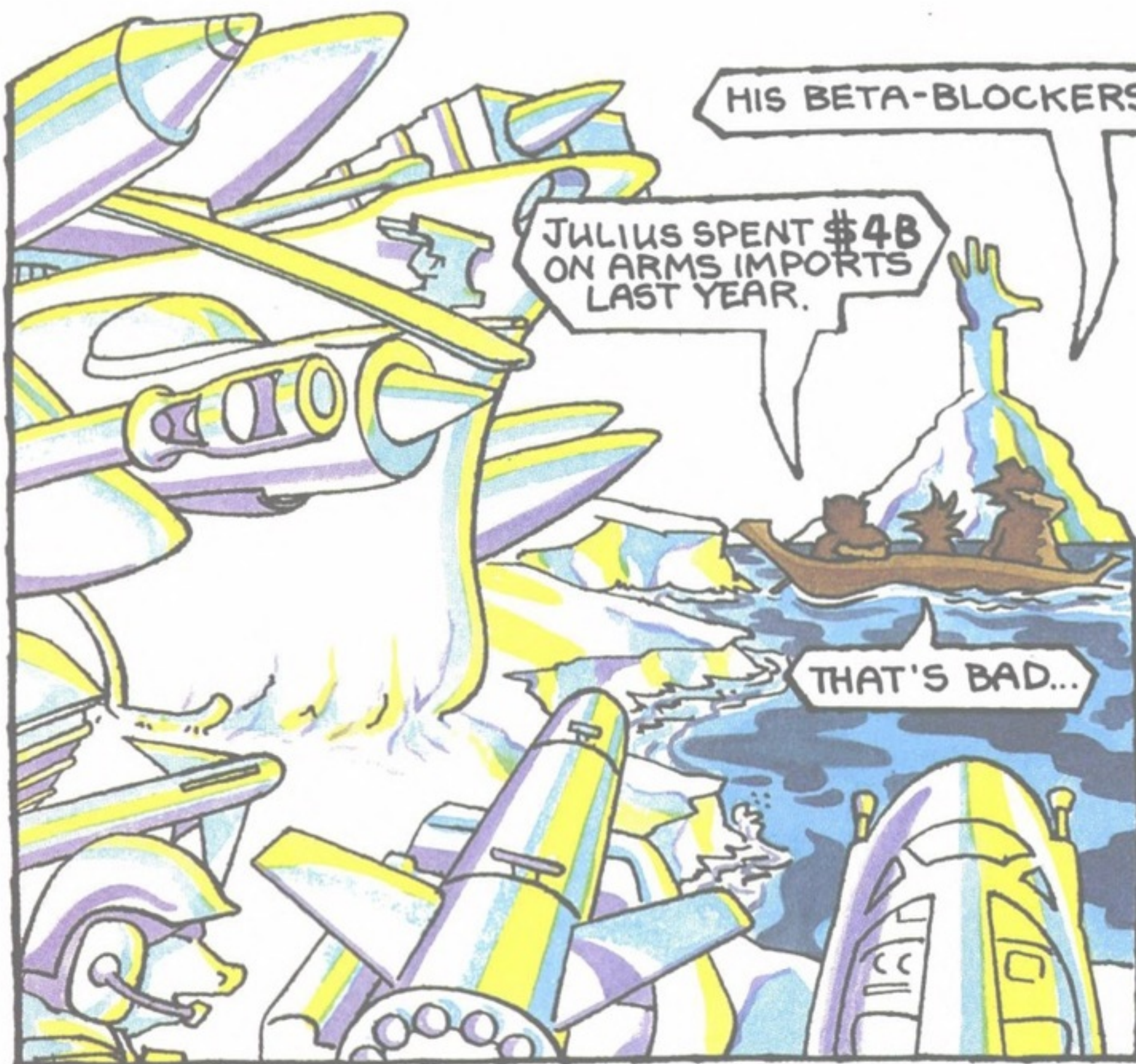
MEANWHILE, THE ICAS TOLD JULIUS...

IF YOU CAN'T PROTECT OUR LAND RIGHTS, WE WILL!

FREEDOM FOR WEST LATASICA!

GET ME MY BETA-BLOCKERS!!





IN 1991, THERE WERE 46 CIVIL WARS HAMMERING OUT AROUND THE WORLD. SOME LUCKY PLACES HAD MORE THAN ONE.



Y'SEE, FOLK DON'T JUST WAKE UP ONE MORNING AND DECIDE...

HEY! I MUST LEAVE MY FAMILY, FRIENDS, ALL THAT I KNOW AND RISK LIFE + LIMB TO ILLEGALLY ENTER A STRANGE COUNTRY, PENNILESS, WITH NO GRASP OF THE LINGO AND JUST A PHOTO OF MECCA TO PROTECT ME!!



NO, THEY GO BECAUSE OF UNBEARABLE...



POVERTY



FAMINE



CONFLICT



ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE



LITTLE THINGS LIKE...!!!?

GOTCHA!

FUNNY HOW NORTHERNERS GET MORE WORKED UP ABOUT DEFORESTATION THAN DECAPITATION...

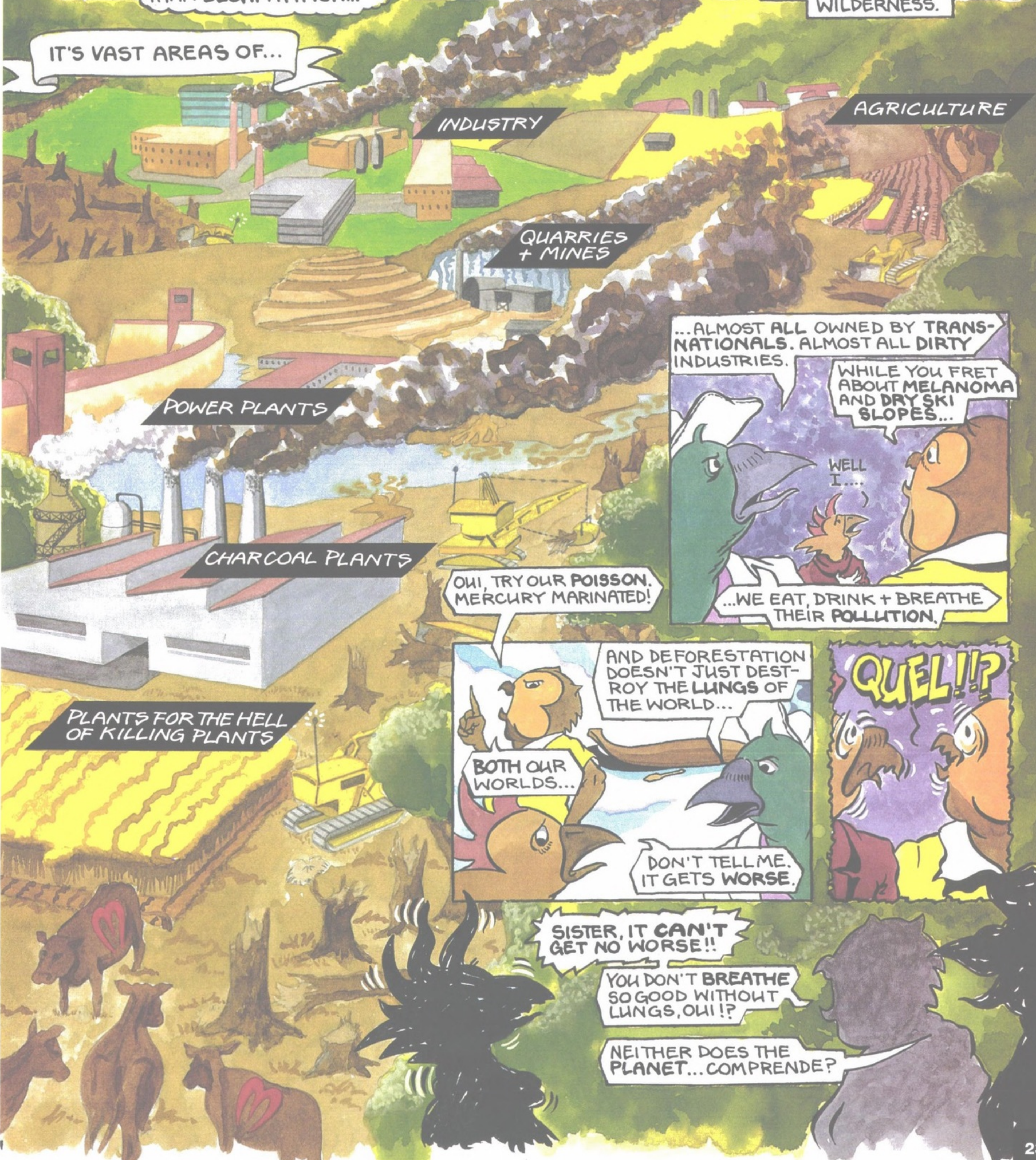
Y'MEAN YOU'RE STILL HACKING DOWN THE...

AS FAST AS WE CAN SELL THE WOOD TO GET THE BUCKS TO...

LET ME GUESS. TO PAY THE PIRANHAS.

YEH BUT IT'S NOT JUST FORESTRY THAT EATS AWAY AT OUR WONDERFUL WILDERNESS.

IT'S VAST AREAS OF...



...ALMOST ALL OWNED BY TRANS-NATIONALS. ALMOST ALL DIRTY INDUSTRIES.

WHILE YOU FRET ABOUT MELANOMA AND DRY SKI SLOPES...

WELL I...

...WE EAT, DRINK + BREATHE THEIR POLLUTION.

OUI, TRY OUR POISSON. MERCURY MARINATED!

BOTH OUR WORLDS...

AND DEFORESTATION DOESN'T JUST DESTROY THE LUNGS OF THE WORLD...

DON'T TELL ME. IT GETS WORSE.

QUEL!!?

SISTER, IT CAN'T GET NO WORSE!!

YOU DON'T BREATHE SO GOOD WITHOUT LUNGS, OUI!!?

NEITHER DOES THE PLANET... COMPRENDE?

BUT THAT'S
DISASTROUS!!



YEH BUT WHAT I WAS
GOING TO
MENTION
WAS...

...THE SPECIES
DESTRUCTION
OF PLANTS AND
ANIMALS...? I
WOULDN'T MIGHT
TIP THE BALANCE.



THIS IS CRAZY! MAD!!
GODDAM CERTIFIABLE!!!



NOT IF YOU'RE A
BANKER...



BUT FOR THOSE
OF SOUND MIND...



NOT SHOOTING
UP DOLLARS AND
SNORTING GILTS...



NOT SCOURING SATELLITE LINKS
FOR THE NEXT GRUBBY DEAL...



IT COULD BE CONSID-
ERED...

A TRIFLE
EXCESSIVE...

THE COST OF THIRD
WORLD DEBT.



IT'S UNBRIDLED BLOODY
EXTORTION! GLOBAL USURY!!
EVIL! SICK! NOT AT ALL NICE!!!



CAN'T BE!! I MEAN, IMAGINE IF THIS
WAS GOING ON BACK HOME...
IN MY COUNTRY...



YOU MIGHT FEEL
SOMEBODY WAS
WAGING WAR
ON YOU?

SHOULDN'T BE
ALLOWED, EH?

I'D FEEL RAPED,
PILLAGED, BESIEGED!



AND YOU MIGHT
DECIDE TO GET
REAL ANGRY
AND GO ON THE
OFFENSIVE.

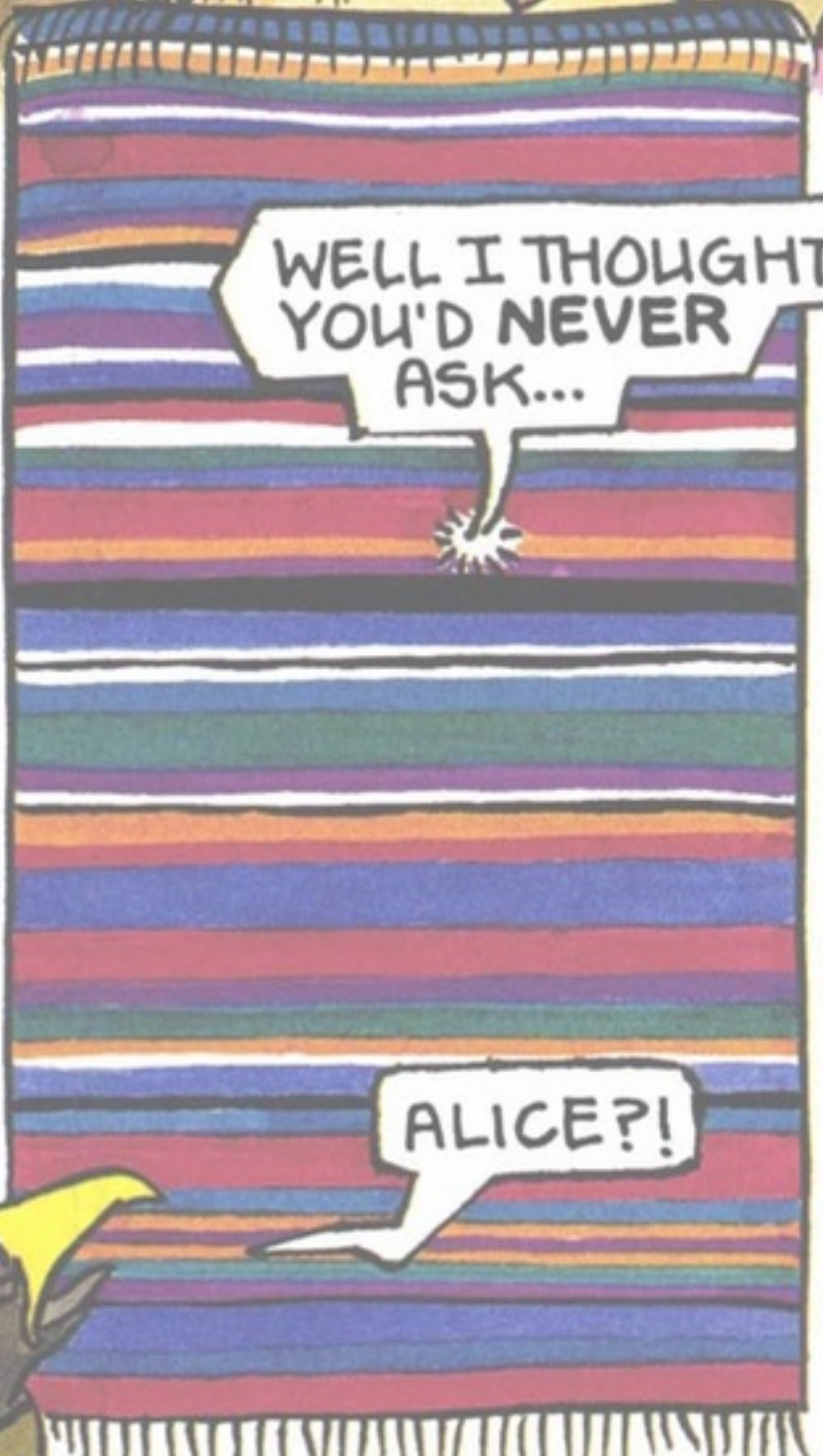
I'M BLOODY LIVID BUT WE'RE
TALKING WORLD MOVEMENTS
HERE...



WHAT THE
HELL CAN
I DO!!?

WELL I THOUGHT
YOU'D NEVER
ASK...

ALICE?!



WRITTEN +
REALISED BY
COLOURIST
BRICKS
SANDY BYWATER



What the hell
can I do?

ACTION

- Boycott banks with a continuingly bad Third World debt record. For example, Lloyds, Midland, NatWest and Barclays in the UK; ANZ in Aotearoa; the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Bank of Montreal and Royal Bank in Canada; Chase Manhattan, Citibank and Bankers Trust in the US.
- Move your account to an ethical bank and choose ethical pension and investment schemes. For example the Co-operative Bank and Friends Provident in the UK; Trustbank and the Prometheus Foundation in Aotearoa; Cooperative Trust Company of Canada in Canada and in the US, try your local credit union.
- Get your union, political party, workplace, college or any other group you belong to switch to ethical banks and trusts.
- Write to your member of parliament and lobby decision makers, protesting against the use of your tax money to support banks which are impoverishing Third World countries.
- Use this magazine to get the message across – show it to your friends, workmates, students, relatives.
- Organize publicity stunts and days or weeks of action. Write letters to the press calling for the cancellation of Third World debt.
- Contact or join one of the campaign groups listed right.



CONTACT

INTERNATIONAL

Freedom From Debt Coalition, Philippines, UP School for Labour and Industrial Relations, UP Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines. A broad alliance of about 250 groups and individuals campaigning to raise awareness of the effects of the foreign debt on the poor and the environment in the Philippines. Its activities range from holding mass demonstrations to presenting briefs to the Filipino Congress, with a strong focus on cancellation of illegitimate and fraudulent debt.

Transnational Institute, Paulus Potterstratt 20, 1071 Amsterdam, Netherlands. Tel: 31 20 662 6608. A decentralized research institute which has researchers in 15 countries and produces books and briefings on North/South issues.

European Campaign on Debt and Development (EURODAD), Av. de Cortenbergh 62, B-1040 Bruxelles, Belgium. Tel: 32 2 7364087. Fax: 32 2 732 1934. A network of non-governmental organizations which campaigns on commercial and official debt.

IBASE, Rua Vicente Souza 29 CEP 22251, Botafogo RJ, Brazil. Researches for popular movements and puts out an on-going analysis of the debt and who is being forced to pay it.

Peru Solidarity Forum, Apartado Postale 18-1655, Lima 18, Peru. Working for the cancellation of bilateral debts with the UK and France.

Inter-Church Coalition on Africa, 129 St. Claire Ave West, Toronto, ON M4 1N5, Canada. Tel: 416 927 1124 Fax: 416 927 7554. Broad coalition campaigning against debt and human rights abuses in Africa.

AUSTRALIA

Community Aid Abroad, 156 George St, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3035. Tel: (03) 289 9444. Involved in campaigning against financial institutions perpetuating Third World debt. Supports indigenous credit schemes.

The Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), 14 Napier St, Deakin, ACT, 2600 Tel: (06) 201 2732. Its North/South Committee is involved in research, campaigning, education and high-level government liaison on the issue of debt.

The Foundation for Development Co-operation, 34 Archer St, Toowong, QLD 4066 (07) 371 5388. Research and sup-

port for agencies promoting equitable financial dealings with the Third World.

AOTEAROA

Christian World Service, PO Box 22-652 Christchurch. Loans out videos and study material on debt.

GATT Watchdog, PO Box 1905, Christchurch. Campaigns on the likely ill-effects on the Third World of the Uruguay Round.

CANADA

Action Canada Network, 904-251 Laurier Ave W, Ottawa ON, K1P 516. Challenges Canadian debt policies

Ten Days for World Development, 86 Pleasant Blvd, Toronto ON, 922 0591. Involved with Freedom from Debt Coalition. It publishes educational material on Third World debt.

UNITED KINGDOM

Third World First, 217 Cowley Rd, Oxford OX 4 1XG Tel 0865 245678 Fax: 0865 200179. A national student organization with groups in universities and colleges throughout the UK. Educates and campaigns against world poverty. Organizes conferences, workshops and training events. Can provide speakers, videos and stalls.

World Development Movement, 25 Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR. Tel: 071 737 6215. Links nationwide network of local groups campaigning for aid, trade and debt policies that will help the world's poor.

New Economics Foundation, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth St, London E1 7SA. Tel: 071 377 5696. Organizes research, publications and conferences that promote a new economics based on social justice and a sustainable use of resources.

Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood St, London N1 7JQ. Tel: 071 490 1555. An environmental pressure group committed to research, education and campaigning. It has highlighted the connection between debt and deforestation.

UNITED STATES

US Campaign for Debt and Development Alternatives, c/o Columban Fathers, 218 D Street, SE Washington, DC 20003. Co-ordinates anti-debt work and publishes a bi-monthly newsletter on the debt crisis.



LEFT TO RIGHT: STUART FRANKLIN; A. WEBB / MAGNUM; BURT GLINN / MAGNUM; ELI REED / MAGNUM



The poorest bear the heaviest burden of Third World debt (left). But for the South's elite (above) debt may even be profitable, enabling lifestyles almost as lavish as those of World Bank and IMF officials (top right) who endeavour to avoid the debt boomerang as it comes back North in the form of drugs, crime and unemployment (right).

The debt boomerang

The Third World debt crisis is doing you harm – whether you live in the North or the South. Susan George explains how a small elite is making a killing at the expense of the world's majority.

If the goals of managers in the official institutions that rule over Third World debt were to squeeze the debtors dry, to transfer enormous resources from South to North and to wage undeclared war on the poor continents and their people, then their policies have been an unqualified success.

If, however, their strategies were intended – as official institutions always claim – to promote development beneficial to all members of society, to preserve the planet's unique environment and gradually

to reduce the debt burden itself, then their failure is colossal.

The most obvious aspect of this failure – or success, depending on your point of view – is financial. Every single month, from the outset of the debt crisis in 1982 until the end of 1990, debtor countries in the South remitted to their creditors in the North an average six-and-a-half billion dollars in interest payments alone. If payments of the principle are included, then debtor countries have paid creditors at a rate of almost

twelve-and-a-half billion dollars per month – as much as the entire Third World spends each month on health and education.

Moreover, the debt crisis has given creditor countries the chance to intervene in the management of dozens of debtors' economies – using the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Their job is simple: to make sure the debt is serviced. Since the average citizen of a low-income debtor country earns less than one fiftieth of the average citizen of a high-

DEBT

KEYNOTE



debtors by the major multilateral agencies and packaged as 'structural adjustment' have cured nothing at all. They have, rather, caused untold human suffering and widespread environmental destruction, emptying debtor countries of their resources, rendering them each year less able to service their debts, let alone invest in economic and human recovery.

The World Bank and the IMF structural adjusters have by now had plenty of time to make their measures work. But they have failed. Had they been corporate executives they would doubtless have been sacked

long ago for incompetence. But no such accountability applies to these international bureaucrats acting on behalf of the creditor governments. They need never submit to the judgement of their victims. They answer only to their own equally unaccountable superiors and, at the top of the

income creditor country, this process is like trying to extract blood from a stone.

To accumulate hard currency and service its debts a country must increase its exports and reduce government spending. Most debtor governments have accepted this and forced their people to co-operate with the draconian policies of the IMF and World Bank to ensure that debts are serviced. Much good has it done them. A decade has passed since the Third World debt crisis first erupted, yet in spite of harsh measures faithfully applied this crisis is today more intractable than ever.

Bureaucratic immunity

Debtor countries have deprived their people of basic necessities in order to provide the private banks and the public agencies of the rich countries with the equivalent of six Marshall Plans (the programme of assistance offered by the US to Europe after the Second World War).

Have these extraordinary outflows served to reduce the absolute size of the debt burden? Not a bit: in spite of paying out more than \$1,300 billion between 1982 and 1990, the debtor countries as a group began the 1990s a full 61 per cent more in debt than they were in 1982. Sub-Saharan Africa's debt increased by 113 per cent during this period.

The economic policies imposed on

bureaucratic tree, to a Board of Governors reflecting the majority voting strength of the richest creditor countries. These lavishly compensated international civil 'servants' are consequently still to be found in Washington and throughout the Third World living exceedingly well.

There are other beneficiaries. For business corporations operating in debtor countries structural adjustment has enhanced profitability by reducing both wages and the power of the unions. For many international banks, debt service payments at unusually high interest rates in the early 1980s helped to fuel several years of record earnings. From the corporate or banking perspective the World Bank and the IMF pass the test with flying colours.

Third World elites don't have much cause for complaint either. They have weathered the 'lost decade of the 1980s' with relative ease and have sometimes profited handsomely from it. They too benefit from plummeting wages. Their money is often in safe havens outside their own countries. Each time the IMF requires a devaluation of the national currency to encourage exports those whose holdings are in foreign currencies automatically become richer at home. And although public services may deteriorate or close down, rich people can afford private ones. So it is not surprising that Third World govern-

ments have failed to unite and to demand debt reductions.

The debtors' lack of unity ensures the draining of their economies and a continuing South-to-North resource flow on a scale far outstripping any the colonial period could devise. The debtor governments have from time to time called for debt relief but have never collectively confronted the creditors. As a reward for docility the creditors have allowed most debtor-country elites to maintain their links to the world financial system, providing them with at least a trickle of fresh money and offering them frequent opportunities to purchase local assets at bargain prices through so-called 'debt-for-equity swaps' or privatization programmes.

Third World debt should not, therefore, be seen as a straightforwardly 'national' problem. Different social classes in debtor countries have vastly divergent interests and are unequally affected. Although debt has visited unprecedented pain on the vast majority of Third World people, the crisis is not necessarily a crisis for everyone.

While the topmost layers of Third World societies remain largely insulated from debt distress, ordinary people in the South sacrifice to pay back loans they never asked for, or which they even fought against and from which they derive no gain. Knowledge of their plight is by now fairly widespread in the developed, creditor countries, thanks to the efforts of thousands of concerned people patiently explaining the human and ecological consequences of the debt crisis in the Third World.

Fallout in the North

Yet the pressures exerted by dozens of non-governmental organizations in both North and South have so far failed to alter basic debt-management policies. Although the Fund and the Bank now claim they seek to 'mitigate the social costs of adjustment', official response to the crisis advances at a calculated snail's pace, inching from one feeble and ineffective 'Plan' to the next while leaving the status quo essentially untouched.

Until now those in the North who have tried to change the debt management strategies have rightly based their arguments on ethical and humanitarian grounds.

The impact of Third World debt fallout in the North is much less well known – doubtless because the consequences of debt are far more serious and life-threatening in the South than in the North. But although people in the South are more grievously affected than those in the North, in both cases a tiny minority benefits while the overwhelming majority pays.

Northern taxpayers have carried commercial banks through the Third World debt crisis from the start and virtually all of

them are blissfully unaware of the fact. We have paid Northern banks between \$44 and \$50 billion in tax relief on bad debts – enough to meet the entire Third World's health spending for one year.

There is another less measurable cost: the strong correlation between debt and worldwide military conflict. Loans have frequently been employed by Third World governments to buy arms from Northern manufacturers for use against both internal and external opponents. Debt promoted the Gulf War. Saddam Hussein saw the invasion of Kuwait as one way of wiping out the colossal debts he owed both to that country and to the allies – much of it used to finance his arms build-up. George Bush granted massive debt forgiveness to an allied Arab nation like Egypt as a reward for staying on his side.

Third World debt is not the *only* cause of, say, increased illegal drug exports to the US and Europe, or of accelerated deforestation hastening the greenhouse effect. But it is, at very least, an aggravating factor. Debt-burdened Latin American governments become hooked on dollars from their coca-producing regions. This severely dampens their incentive to encourage legal crops. Increasing drug exports, in turn,

escalate the costs of law enforcement and contribute to social breakdown in the North.

A stake in change

Such harmful effects did not suddenly spring fully armed from the head or the belly of the World Bank. They result from a set of policies aimed at promoting a capital-intensive, energy-intensive, unsustainable Western model of development which was favourable only to Third World elites, Northern banks and transnational corporations.

Not surprisingly, massive overborrowing coupled with high interest rates led to the debt crisis. This crisis in turn provided official debt managers in the 1980s and 1990s with a perfect lever to entrench the very development model which had caused the original problem. Relying on unbridled free market forces and export-led growth, they have devastated the unprotected: the poorest, most vulnerable groups and the environment.

They are still doing it and, quite simply, they have to be stopped.

Any standard of human decency or ethical imperative demands a change in debt management, but so does enlightened self-interest. Everyone outside the narrowest of

elite circles has a stake in positive change. If enough people in the North realize that the Third World debt crisis is their crisis they may well insist on radically different policies, speak out and seek to join with similar forces in the South.

For this to happen we must first think for ourselves, recognize the modern mythology that prevents us from acting and then act. There are some obvious directions we can take to help the 'natural majority' to become effective. Workers, farmers, trade unionists, activists, parents, immigrants, taxpayers – we all have to make a common cause against the common danger.

We do not want to prescribe a programme but to state some principles:

First, those who borrowed were rarely elected by their peoples. They squandered money on arms or used it to further entrench their own power and privilege, counting on their poorer compatriots to make sacrifices to pay back the loans when due. Democratically elected governments should not be expected to assume the debt burdens of dictatorial predecessors.

Those who made the loans were either irresponsible or intentionally attempting to make the debtors subservient to their interests. The creditors have been richly rewarded and are in no danger if the debt is cancelled or converted to provide genuine development. They should play by normal rules and not expect the public to pay for their costly mistakes.

The debt has already been largely or entirely repaid. The North is, in fact, substantially in debt to the South and it has received, since 1982, the cheapest raw materials on record.

But cancellation and other debt reduction measures must not be used as an excuse or a pretext to further cut the debtor countries out of the benefits of the world economy. The guiding precepts should be popular participation in decision-making at every level, social equity and ecological prudence.

So long as the policies of the rich North represent a mixture of crude carrot-and-stick manoeuvres, coupled with basic contempt for the South, its problems and its peoples, we can expect more lethal North-South tensions, more powerful boomerangs hurtling back at us, a further forced retreat of the rich countries into Fortress America or Fortress Europe.

Alternatively, we could decide that it is time – high time – we began to live together on this improbable planet as *homo sapiens* with a good deal more *sapiens*. ■

Economist **Susan George** is a prolific writer, thinker and prominent campaigner on the subject of debt. Her books include *How the Other Half Dies*, *A Fate worse than Debt*, *Ill Fares the Land* and most recently *The Debt Boomerang* (Pluto, 1992).

The six boomerangs

ENVIRONMENT

Debt-induced poverty causes Third World people to exploit natural resources in the most profitable and least sustainable way, which causes an increase in global warming and a depletion of genetic bio-diversity. This ultimately harms the North too.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Exports from rich countries to the Third World would be much higher if those countries were not strapped by debt, and this would stimulate manufacturing and employment in the North. The loss of jobs due to 'lost exports' is estimated to account for one fifth of total US unemployment.

DRUGS

The illegal drugs trade is the major earner for heavily indebted countries like Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. The social and economic costs of the drug-consuming boom in the North is phenomenal – \$60 billion a year in the US alone.

IMMIGRATION

The International Labour Organization estimates that there are about 100 million legal or illegal immigrants and refugees in the world today. Many go to the richer countries of the North to flee poverty and the effects of IMF-imposed economic policies.

TAXES

Governments in the North have used their tax-payers' money to give banks tax concessions so that they can write off so-called 'bad debts' from Third World countries. But in most cases this has not reduced the actual debts of poor countries. By 1991 UK banks had gained from tax credits for more than half their exposure. The eventual total relief will amount to \$8.5 billion.

CONFLICT

Debt creates social unrest and war. Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 largely in retaliation for the latter's insistence that Saddam's regime repay a \$12 billion loan.

For more information **Third World First** have produced *The Debt Boomerang Pack* in conjunction with **Susan George** and the **Transnational Institute**. It can be obtained from
217 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1XG, UK.

Chocolate unwrapped

Is chocolate really the food of love, luxury and passion? A closer look at how it is produced and consumed reveals a less appealing side of its nature. The \$130 million spent annually in the UK on advertising chocolate is targeted carefully at women, for whom it is the number one binge food: there are some three-and-a-half million sufferers from compulsive eating disorders in the country. At least 32 pesticides are



used in cocoa production and residues have been found in the bars themselves as well as contaminating the land where cocoa is grown. Ill-protected and poorly paid pesticide sprayers commonly experience nosebleeds, breathing problems, headaches, nausea and skin rashes: 80 per cent are women, whose wages average five dollars a day, making chocolate a luxury they cannot afford.

For more information on the 'Politics of Passion' campaign contact Naomi Diamond at Women's Environmental Network, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2EA, UK

Piano pages cow

Japanese cows now have their personal paging systems... call and they come – more eagerly if it's piano music that has distinct and individual notes. With cowherds becoming unaffordable in Japan, researchers considered the feasibility of an individual musical call that would be transmitted to the cow via tiny pagers fastened to its neck. It takes about two weeks to train the cows to respond to their individual musical notes. Relaying the music over loudspeakers is another technique being tried out on some Japanese farms.

Down to Earth vol 1 no 7



Late-payers and cheapskates

UN finances are in a mess, largely because the UN is expected to put the world to rights without being given the means to do so. This year only 18 of its 180 members had paid their dues in full by the 31 January deadline. The US, which pays 25 per cent of the regular budget and would pay more if a top limit had not been set, never stumps up until October; Japan never pays until June. The UN is owed \$500 million in arrears, about half of it from the US. On average, countries give the UN's peacekeepers only \$1.40 for every \$1,000 they spend on their own military forces. To put it in perspective: the sum of the UN's regular and peacekeeping budgets in 1992 – a particularly active year – would not have paid for two Stealth bombers.

'Financing an Effective United Nations', Ford Foundation, New York

Business as usual

One and a half million children die each year – four thousand a day – because they are not breastfed, according to UNICEF. Nestlé is the world's largest baby milk company, promoting its product by supplying it free to hospitals worldwide. In July 1991 the Synod of the Church of England voted to join a boycott of Nescafé, Nestlé's flagship product – and sales of the instant coffee have dropped by three per cent since. But the company still refuses to act. The promise made by all the major baby milk suppliers to end free supplies to hospitals by December 1992 has not been kept. Nestlé has switched to making gifts to health workers and promoting its products in hospitals. The boycott of Nescafé is therefore being stepped up.

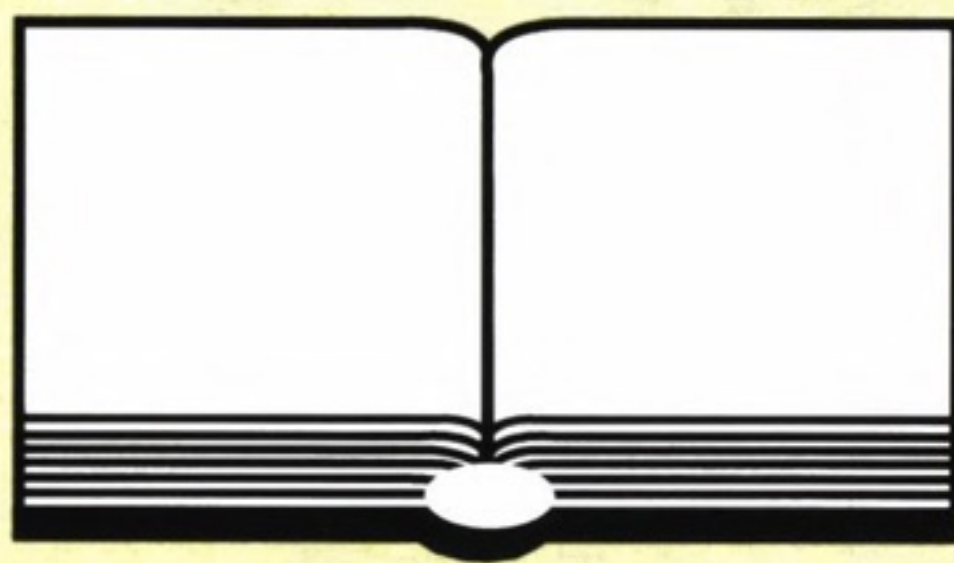
For more information contact Baby Milk Action, 23 St Andrew's Street, Cambridge, CB2 3AX, UK



Baby barkers

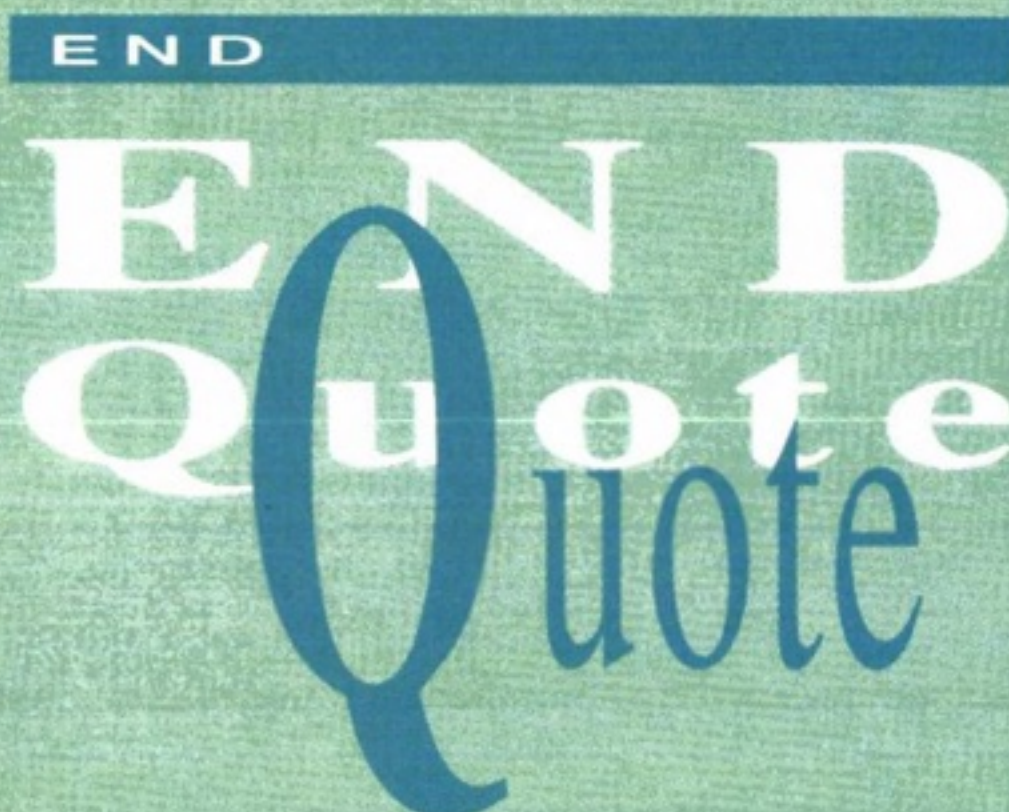
Why do dogs bark? Behavioural biologists think they have the answer: because they never grow up. Scientists think the domestic dog evolved from the wolf, which – like most wild dogs – seldom barks. By contrast a cocker spaniel can get through 907 barks in ten minutes. Analysis of the sounds in a bark suggest it is somewhere between a puppy's distress call and a growl: both 'come here' and 'go away'. Why should an animal spend so much time telling the world that it's indecisive? Because tameness is juvenile behaviour. Domestic dogs were selected for tameness – or prolonged adolescence and lifelong barking.

New Scientist no 1,862



Book one

The island nation of Sao Tomé and Príncipe has Africa's highest literacy rate, but until recently had never produced a book. Although the writers' union is one of the tiny country's most prestigious institutions all it had ever published was its own by-laws. Finally, last December, the country's first book was published: *The Lost Word and Other Stories*. A UN representative from the Netherlands helped to design the book, a Corsican provided the paper and the printing was done by a local newspaper. And this is only the beginning. The first set of mimeographed high-school readings is anticipated this year.



THE REFUGEE SPEAKING

In your country
God is dead.
In my country
God is death.

Ismail Kho'i (exiled Iranian poet, whose work was recently banned by the Iranian regime because he signed an open letter in support of Salman Rushdie.)



Jack fills out his cheeks but fails to blow Hoffa's house down.



Hoffa

directed by Danny De Vito

Wittgenstein

directed by Derek Jarman

The Hollywood biopic comes saddled with problems. Not only does an unwieldy life have to be condensed into two or three hours and often comes littered with clunkingly obvious asides of the 'one day, William, you will be a famous playwright' kind, but also the subject has to be sympathetically portrayed. Why else, ask the studio executives, would audiences want to hang around with them for the duration of the movie?

Hence last year the notorious racketeer and murderer Bugsy Siegel turned out, courtesy of Warren Beatty, to be rather charming and a little misunderstood. Celluloid seems to redeem all those it touches. It is not surprising then that *Hoffa*, which dramatizes the life and times of the controversial leader of the Teamsters – under his leadership the most powerful of US trade unions – tends to the hagiographic. There is a certain irony here, for after all the US film industry is held together by a flotilla of truck drivers. If the Teamsters strike, Hollywood screeches to a halt.

The chronicles of a union movement are a noble and epic subject for cinema but one that the mainstream, until now, has shied away from. The film, which marks a serious turn for comic director/actor Danny De Vito, is not without its rousing moments. There are the bloody riots for the right to strike played against a backdrop of burning skies and Hoffa's charged speeches. But it is all rather stodgy and no more

than a cartoon guide to the working man's struggle (and women, including Hoffa's wife Josephine, only ever hover on the periphery). Played by a squat and corpulent Jack Nicholson, Hoffa is a pugnacious man of the people who bullies potential members into knowing what is good for them, dallies with the Mob and is eventually assassinated. The movie isn't blind to his dirtier side but somehow its very structure demands that he comes out on top – in the courtroom confrontations with Bobby Kennedy, for example.

However questionable his actions are though, David Mamet's script always seems to see Hoffa's gangster-style leadership as a rather good thing. Ultimately, like *Malcolm X*, *Hoffa* has a monumental feel rather than daring to chip away at a more complicated history.

Politics ☆ ☆

Entertainment ☆ ☆ ☆

While *Hoffa*'s budget weighed in at \$45 million, Derek Jarman's life of Wittgenstein cost a paltry \$500,000. No doubt Wittgenstein himself, who eschewed worldly goods and wanted to go to the USSR to work as a labourer, would have approved. With just a black backdrop and a minimum of props, the film is a sparsely styled exposition of the gay Austrian philosopher's life from his privileged childhood in Vienna to his ascetic existence in Cambridge.

Co-scripted by the Marxist Professor of English at Oxford, Terry Eagleton, it attempts to convey some of the philosopher's ideas about language – ideas that he perversely refuted at the end of his life. It also draws upon the personal contradiction that ensnared him – the fact that he was applying a philosophical system to a world in which his own gay love was illegal. Lucid and surprisingly witty, this is the Wittgenstein lecture as cabaret.

Politics ☆ ☆ ☆

Entertainment ☆ ☆ ☆



books

Shadows

by Chenjerai Hove (Heinemann)

The Man Who Came In from the Back of Beyond

by Biyi Bandele-Thomas (Heinemann)

Smouldering Charcoal

by Tiyambe Zeleza (Heinemann)

Here are three African exhibits from contemporary fiction's gallery of loss. Alienation, the breakdown of familiar patterns of living, urban malaise and political terror: the treatment of these themes is a worldwide phenomenon. Whereas with some authors in the West it can turn into navel-gazing, novelists from other parts of the world seem compelled to render the tumult of their nations.

Set against the Zimbabwean war of liberation, Chenjerai Hove's *Shadows* is a story of young lovers who 'opt for death instead of life'. Death is everywhere and arbitrary in this Zimbabwe, where people are so brutalized by war and the loss of roots that they drift in a shadowland of continual pain. The lovers themselves may represent the dying hopes of their communities uprooted from their traditional farmlands. Written as an extended prose poem, the narrative has passages of great emotional resonance and beauty, but can at other times be dense, dirge-like and mawkish. Hove's strength is his ear for the speech and proverbs of the people he writes about. In English their conventional wisdom is fresh and interesting.

Politics ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Entertainment ☆ ☆ ☆

Bandele-Thomas' English is all his own, a lively mix of turn-of-

century pedantry and ornament, thriller-style raciness and cheeky similes. His novel is set in Kafanchan in Nigeria, the town of his birth and he writes about it with a sureness that is palpable. The story concerns the adventures of one Bozo Macika, whose life after the breakdown of his family slides into increasing violence and squalor as he gives himself up to that most potent of urban symbols – the gun. But the prose is shot through with wit and the story through its many twists and turns is enjoyable, perhaps because there is so much of it. Less than enjoyable, however, is the curious combination of macho swagger and tidy moralizing that runs through it. Here is someone trying very hard indeed to gather as much street credibility as possible – and it shows.

Politics ☆ ☆

Entertainment ☆ ☆ ☆

Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* is an altogether more conventional novel and, as it turns out, a more satisfying one. Zeleza's canvas is very broad – he tells the story of two families from different economic and social classes whose lives get inevitably overrun by the corruption that strangles ordinary existence in Malawi. But he shows us that life goes on for individuals despite the collective despair and failed dreams of an entire nation. Even though his characters wind up as refugees in another land they manage to preserve their identity and their smouldering aspirations for change in their country. Compassionate and real, the book praises the tenacity of the human spirit without glamorizing it.

Politics ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Entertainment ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆



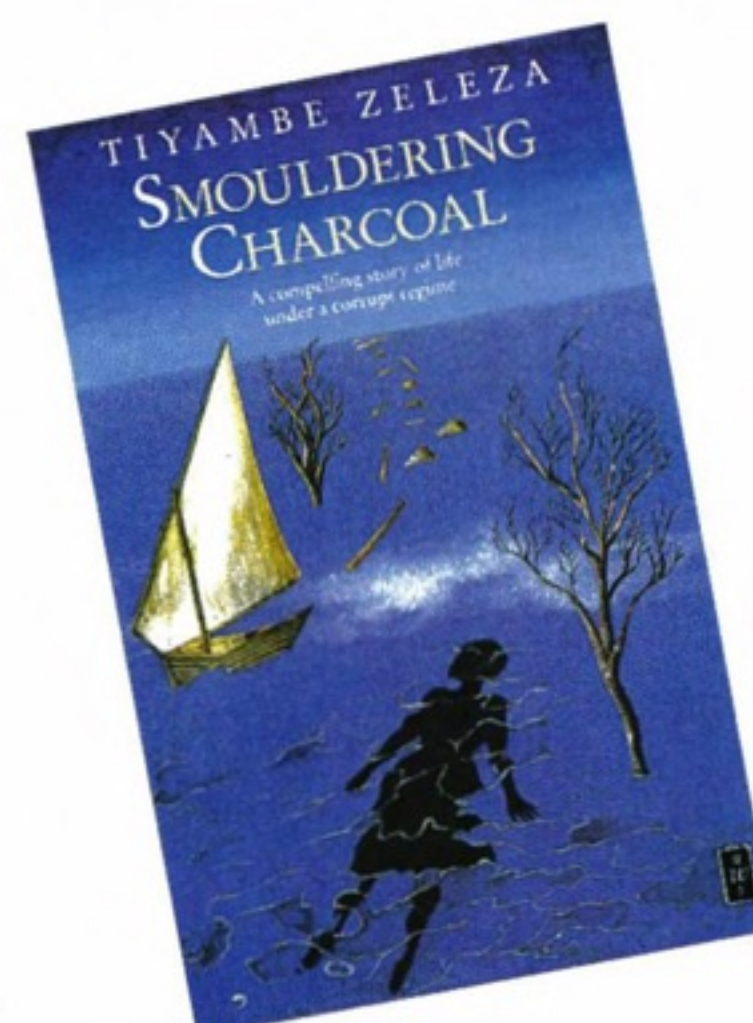
music

The Predator

by Ice Cube (4th & Broadway)

Alarm bells, gunshots, a panicking crowd and the sounds of a cop conducting a search: if this collage didn't open Ice Cube's new album, then it could just as easily have been snatched from some gangster movie. Cube – one of LA's most contentious rap stars – has never been one for understatement. *Death Certificate*, his last album, was marked by some appalling out-bursts against Koreans and Jews.

Ice Cube's America is an ugly one, painted with the broadest strokes. Cops get shot, the Ku Klux Klan are ascendant. Black



THE classic

Ace in the Hole

... being the film that every aspiring journalist should watch

IN an era when the issues of press freedoms and individual privacy are themselves consistently turned into the stuff of newspaper headlines, one film still stands as the most blistering, honest and concise introduction to the unwritten ground rules of a career in tabloid journalism: Billy Wilder's searing 1951 drama **Ace in the Hole** (also known as *The Big Carnival*).

Generally regarded as the most relentlessly cynical film ever to have come out of Hollywood, **Ace in the Hole** was a flop at the box office and was even banned in colonial Malaya for presenting a facet of American life 'that might be misunderstood'. The film attracted mostly hostile reviews from newspaper critics who refused to admit that the events and characters it depicted had any kind of truthful relationship to their own work practices.

Chuck Tatum (Kirk Douglas) is an experienced reporter who has been fired from a succession of major newspapers back East. Now working on a small paper in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Tatum and his young photographer colleague Herbie stop off at a desert roadhouse and happen upon a man, Leo Minosa, trapped deep underground inside a cave.

With his big-city ear for a story, Tatum realizes that this could be his 'ace in the hole', his way back into the big time. So he hatches a deal with the local crooked sheriff to have exclusive access to the trapped man and also convinces Leo's selfish wife not to walk out on her husband but to play the part of the distraught lover. Then, while Tatum gets busy putting together the perfect human-interest story, the national press, TV, radio and the general public descend upon the desert location in droves, turning it into a grotesque carnival.

However, what Tatum really needs for the story to go well is for Leo to stay trapped for several days. So he makes the fateful decision to rig the rescue. Instead of the rescue team shoring up the tunnel and getting the trapped man out in 16 hours, Tatum contrives to have them drill down to him from above, an operation guaranteed to take at least five days. That's great in terms of a good running story – the problem is, Leo dies before the drill reaches him...

Douglas's wonderfully vitriolic performance turns sarcasm into an art form in a film that's packed full of memorable lines. However, the most penetrating feature of the movie is the way

in which it mercilessly exposes the craft of the gutter journalist.

The symbolism is perfect. An innocent man lies trapped and dying. He's pleased to see the newspapers in which he's front-page news, but all the time the reporter is ruthlessly exploiting him, using his name and the basic situation to fabricate his own ideal STORY. The process by which one individual's personal crisis is transformed into a big headline and a set of worthless clichés to entertain the reading public is brutally revealed. Tatum talks of the big papers 'lapping up' and 'gobbling' his work. The image is apt: this is journalism expressed as a kind of cannibalism, with the newspapers and their readers callously devouring – and here literally destroying – their subject.

Ace in the Hole's message was unpalatable because as well as indicting the press it also indicted the public which voraciously consumes this kind of story. We, the audience, are forced to identify with the people who flock to the carnival above what becomes effectively Leo's tomb – and that's a deeply unpleasant experience. Tatum's own cynicism is overwhelming as he watches the rescue site turn into a bizarre money-spinning circus: 'Mr and Mrs America, they'll eat it up – the story

and the hamburgers!'

When the film came out most critics accused Douglas of hamming his role. They wouldn't believe that a reporter could act and talk in such a brutally selfish way. These days his character seems much more credible. Journalists behave like Tatum all the time: it would be very difficult to hold down a reporter's job on one of Rupert Murdoch's mass-selling titles without behaving something like this – without being prepared to 'doorstep' a grieving widow or pay a relative for a photo of a murdered child. But the difference between Tatum and the modern tabloid press is that Tatum admits his contempt for his readers, his profession and finally himself, something that most real journalists and editors would never do.

Ignorant readers and the gutter press feed off each other. That's the relationship that **Ace in the Hole** crystallizes so well. An improved brand of tabloid journalism requires an improved kind of reader, but for that what's needed is an education system which works. When tabloids like Murdoch's plummet in circulation, we'll know we're getting one and **Ace in the Hole** will no longer be quite the most honest and socially relevant newspaper movie ever made. ■

Tom Tunney

Ace in the Hole directed by Billy Wilder (1951)

America is the impoverished, brutalized flipside to white civilization. A good day is defined as a day when 'I didn't even have to use my AK' (the AK 47 gun). Cube's language – the album comes with a discreet warning sticker for parents of impressionable children – is equally blunt. His sleeve notes read like a *j'accuse* of contemporary America; the album lyrics throw out warnings to trespassers.

Although last year's riots in South Central LA showed that such views are not excessively paranoid, one wonders what merit there is in endless albums telling us 'how it is'. **Predator** received a quiet release in the US and, after the furore over *Death Certificate*, the violent content of tracks such as *Now I*



The inflammatory Ice Cube.

Gotta Wet 'Cha, We Had To Tear This Motherfucker Up and Say Hi to the Bad Guy seemed predictable to US critics. Their muted response meant that some fine, heavy-gauge music was ignored: Cube's Lench Mob producers have cut in some fearsome breaks (Parliament's *Aqua Boogie* and the Isley Brothers' *Footsteps in the Dark* are put to effective use), while Cube concentrates on cut-up conversations that seem written with a movie scenario in mind.

But Cube can hardly complain if people concentrate on what he says rather than what he sounds like. In political terms **Predator** does not even try to offer solutions. And in presenting that tired old picture of its maker in full gangster swagger, it makes you wish for the clarity and diplomacy of KRS-1 – the peace-campaigning New York rapper. *This* will never stop the violence.

Politics ☆

Entertainment ☆ ☆

STAR RATING

Excellent ☆☆☆☆☆
Very good ☆☆☆☆
Good ☆☆☆
Fair ☆☆
Poor ☆

Reviews editor: Chris Brazier



BFI STILL, POSTERS AND DESIGNS



QUESTIONS

...that have always intrigued you about the world will appear in this, your section, and be answered by other readers. Please address your answers and questions to 'Curiosities'.

Why is the depletion of the ozone layer greatest in the southern hemisphere when the use of ozone-destroying chemicals is greatest in the northern hemisphere?

It is colder in the Antarctic than the Arctic and low temperatures and ice clouds facilitate destruction of the ozone layer. A band of westerly winds, called the circumpolar vortex, keeps mild air from the equator away from the Antarctic, enabling ice clouds to



form there. The ozone hole above the Antarctic is largest in October when spring sunlight first arrives after the long winter and provides energy for the chemical reactions that deplete ozone. But thinning of the ozone layer happens in the North too and we should

all be concerned about atmospheric pollution.

Douglas Clark
Reading, UK

Mosquitoes and other insects insert the equivalent of a micro needle into a variety of human bloods. So why are they not in the list of transmitters of HIV?

The mosquito is not a carrier of HIV. At each feed it sucks blood for food without injecting any of its last meal because it has already been digested. Like humans, mosquitoes can quite safely eat food that contains HIV because digestion rapidly kills the virus.

The only thing which can survive the digestive powers of a mosquito is the organism that causes malaria. It is so tough that it can survive till the next mosquito feeding time and it can survive the human immune system too. The drugs which kill it very nearly kill the people who have to take them too – and the malaria virus is increasingly resistant to even those drugs.

Dr JS Barrett
London, UK

Is it true that the UK is still paying for the First World War and to whom?

Contrary to the answer given in NI 242 Britain ran up huge debts to the US during the First World War and still owes \$14 billion. The last token payment was made in December 1933 – though in March 1949 a further \$4,480 was paid under the terms of the will of a British subject. The US, apparently unable to force repayment and/or appreciative of Britain's inability to pay, has made no further demands.

Mark Pack
York, UK

Is it true that the menstrual cycles of women living together in women-only communities coincide and if so why?

I assume that your two correspondents in NI 241 were answering this question with flippancy in the April Fool genre.

The truth of the matter is they do not synchronize. I should know: I was 32 years in an enclosed order of nuns.

C Baker-Pearce
Belper, UK

AWAITING YOUR ANSWERS

I've recently discovered loo roll made from cotton which is so soft I find it difficult to believe I can use it with a clean conscience. Can anyone advise me whether it's likely to have been produced in circumstances that are environmentally friendly and politically correct?

Jenny Visick
London, UK

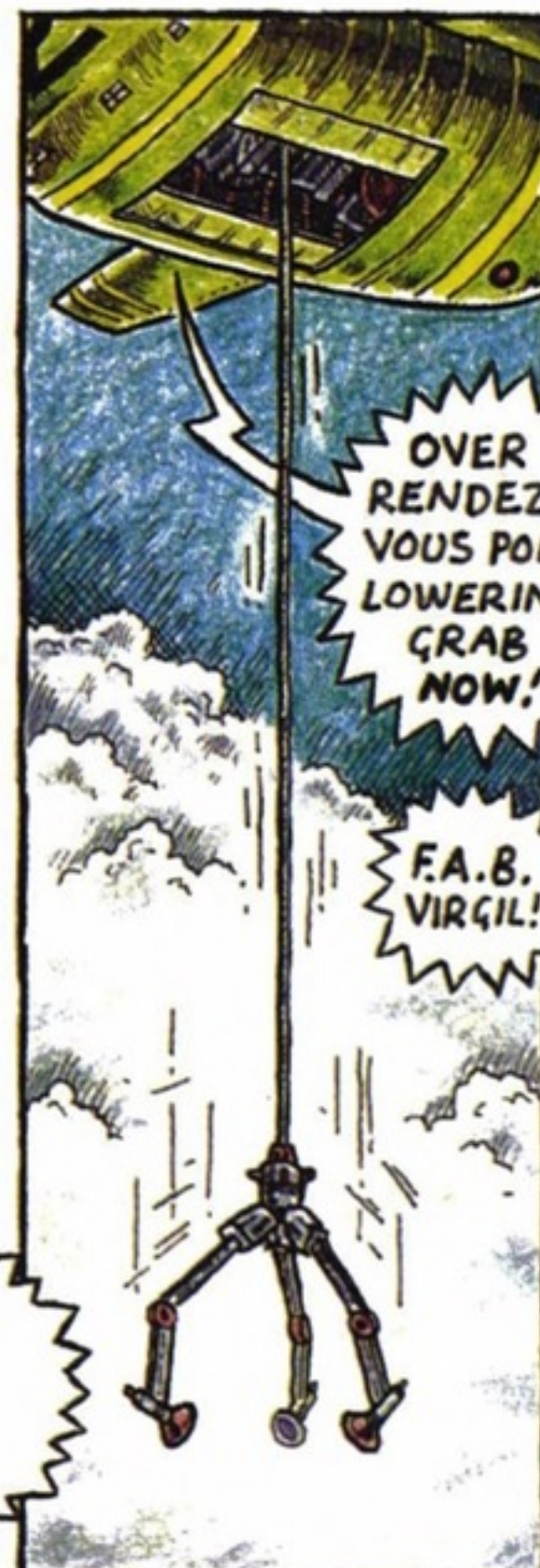
Which does greater harm to children of an unhappy marriage: a) seeing their parents quarrelling and fighting or b) having their parents living apart, in peace, and sharing responsibility for the children?

Tony Goodchild,
Icarda, Syria

What are the origins and meaning of the expression 'ethnic cleansing'? Who first used it?

Kathleen Jones
Bishops Castle, UK

If you have any questions or answers please send them to **Curiosities, New Internationalist, 55 Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BW, UK**, or to your local NI office (see inside front cover for addresses)



Love and death in Sarajevo

*We've been waiting a long time for the right article to publish on the war in the former Yugoslavia. The pattern of events there has been changing week by week, while we plan our magazines months in advance. But we felt this vivid account of everyday life, love and sorrow in Bosnia by the Filipino journalist **Criselda Yabes** justified publication in full, so we have changed our usual format to accommodate it.*



NOEL QUIDU

MARIJA held my arm reassuringly. 'And now,' she said holding her breath, 'the adventure begins. Are you ready?'

I had no other choice.

We were leaving the damaged newspaper building in Sarajevo where she works. There was no other way to get out except to cross a deserted railway line exposed to sniper fire.

Marija was still holding my arm. Her friend Senad was our front guard, armed only with an umbrella. We dashed across the tracks, took a safer route behind an abandoned warehouse for dilapidated trucks, then crawled into the bushes beside a river. That over, we faced the final obstacle – climbing over a fence; if done quickly it meant we had less of a chance of being shot.

For a split second I was so immobilized by fear that Marija and Senad had to pull me off the ground. But we made it to safety. Marija gave me a hug of relief and we broke into nervous laughter. 'I think we need a vacation in Los Angeles,' Senad said jokingly,

**If I were a bird and had wings
I'd fly
all over Bosnia
I'd fly
I'd never stop
until
I'd seen all of it**

BOSNIAN FOLK SONG

'where the sun shines and there are people everywhere.'

Almost every day since the civil war came to Sarajevo ten months ago Marija and Senad have taken the same route to and from work. They've naturally developed the mental strength to ward off fear – the bravery of fatalism.

Marija, a reporter, and Senad, a photographer with the underground newspaper *Oslobodenje* – which means 'liberation' –

have taken upon themselves the dangerous work of covering a complicated war.

That sunny day Marija was wearing a flak jacket for the first time. A year ago before she became a war reporter Marija had a glamorous job working for a women's magazine. She hadn't lost any of her sophistication. Her lips were painted red, her hair nicely trimmed. She wore a fake diamond stud in her left ear, a dangling earring in her right and a bright blue jacket over her bullet-proof vest.

Everywhere I went in the former Yugoslavia the images of



ALL PHOTOS: MARLENE DANIELS

Lament for peace in Bosnia: the cemeteries are overcrowded (above), the forests are felled for firewood (centre), as the people revert to medieval ways of life behind the crude divisions of war (right).

women like Marija belied the ugliness of war. It was as if keeping themselves beautiful with cosmetics and stylish clothes were a psychological defiance of misery. 'We have to do this even if war is going on,' she told me. 'We can't just stay in the basement. Life has to go on.'

Marija left me at the guard post of the UN military base that was once a post office. She reminded me about the letter she had written hastily over lunch. It was a love letter I was to deliver to a man named Amer in Pristina, where I would be going the following week. I promised her it would get to him. We embraced each other and said goodbye.

As I walked into the UN base a man with whom I spent most of my three days in Sarajevo waved at me. Nebosja 'Neso' Marijanovic beamed an avuncular smile and pulled me close to him. 'How's my favourite?' he said, as if I had just come home from the neighbourhood playground.

Neso is a Serb. Anyone who thinks Serbs are monsters would not think it of him.

Neso is as much a victim as any Muslim or Croat of the civil strife in Bosnia-Herzegovina. His wife is a Croat; he had to send her and their son to a refugee camp in the Croatian city of Split.

For hours he talked to me about his life 'before all this'. Those who tell their stories steer away from the tragic narratives that are the stuff of journalism. He sticks to the past: 'I was an economics major working for a computer company'. And to the present: 'I'm now a driver for UNICEF'. He takes the emotional leap to avoid what happened in between – to his own people. Pointing to the

urchins lurking outside the fence of the UN base he said: 'They used to be bright boys who went to school every day. Now they're beggars.'

Neso showed me what has happened to Sarajevo. In a white Land Rover he drove me through the streets of what had been one of Yugoslavia's most charming cities. The park had lost its habitués; the presidential office stood as helpless as its people; the cemetery was overcrowded. Near the cemetery is the stadium, now a storage space for humanitarian relief goods, once the pride of Sarajevo during the 1984 Winter Olympics.

Neso counts himself lucky. Working for a UN agency at the heavily guarded military headquarters of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) accords him the privilege of electricity, water and heating – the basic necessities of which many Bosnians are deprived. He has access to armoured personnel carriers (APCs) – the only mode of transport, aptly called 'taxis' – and to the daily flights of about 15 UN cargo planes known as 'Maybe Airlines', which may or may not give you a lift out of Sarajevo once they've unloaded crates of humanitarian food.

'This is California,' said Neso, gesturing to a four-story building with a basement. 'Outside is Cambodia.'

I was given a room in the 'California' basement with French nurses. It is the safest place to be. The daily grind of military planning to help humanitarian relief operations takes place upstairs. That's where I ran into the captain.

On our first encounter he took me to the rooftop, from where we could see the deadly 'fireworks' at a distance and hear the sound of artillery amid the darkness of the city. 'The Serbs fire 5,000 artillery shells every day,' he told me. 'People are still living in that apartment building,' he added, pointing to the one closest to the firing. 'They sleep at night but they don't know if they will wake up the next day.'

Inside the captain's office another UN officer appeared to join us in conversation. He carried a thick file of papers and dropped them on the floor. They were records of Serb prisoners in Muslim hideouts: 700 in Tarcin, 1,050 in Pazaric, 23 in Hrasnica (including 16 of them beaten to death); and Muslims in Serb camps: 57 in Kula, 479 in Hadzici. The officer had collected dozens of reports about prison camps from both sides.



A soldier jaded by war can either pretend it doesn't exist or joke about it. This officer had the gift of humour and he turned his experiences into a comic adventure that lasted all night. We were within listening distance of the commander's quarters and we had to lower our voices like adolescents dis-

when he came face-to-face with a Serb colonel. At a prearranged meeting in the abandoned Hotel Kamesko in Donji Lapac, Colonel Dusan Banjac was pleading for humanitarian help.

Colonel Bresse showed up at the rendezvous with Jacques Franquin, the outspoken Belgian chief officer of UNHCR in Bihac. The Serb colonel, seeing that Franquin brought his female Muslim translator with him, remarked: 'Ahh, why do you have such a pretty one and I get stuck with this?' jabbing a finger into the underling who served as his interpreter.

Franquin's translator said nothing and sat down to begin a grueling two-hour session of translating from Serbo-Croat into English. The Serb colonel is a man she holds responsible for wounding her father and the death of her best friend. Occasionally she smoked, holding her cigarette with trembling fingers.

Colonel Bresse privately believed the food would go to Colonel Banjac's ill-fed troops. Franquin therefore gave the Serb a hard time. He demanded permission to visit every house and meet with civilian authorities. He said that if the Serbs wanted access to food they must open a restricted road leading to Kajina.

Colonel Banjac scratched his head and pounded on the table. He would agree to every demand except opening up the road.

'Then maybe some kind of a cease-fire can be arranged,' Franquin suggested.

The Serb was astounded.

'If there were a cease-fire,' he replied, raising his voice, 'then there would be no war!'

The look of disgust on Franquin's face was unmistakable. Alone with Colonel Bresse after the Serb officer had left, Franquin blurted out: 'It was all bullshit!' The French colonel tried to lighten Franquin's mood. He said teasingly, 'I think this is the beginning of a love story.'

There are real love stories, even in wartime.

I kept my promise to deliver Marija's letter to the man she had not seen in ten months.

When I arrived in Pristina I immediately called Amer. He came right away to get the letter and returned to my hotel the next day with a reply for Marija.

Amer has a handsome face, and it dissolved in fear and self-pity as he spoke. He was close to tears while recounting the first days of war in Sarajevo. A Serb had aimed a rifle at his face. That near-death experience had driven him away from the city where he had lived for a decade and had fallen in love with Marija. He had to leave because he is a Muslim. Marija would not come with him. She had to be with her family. Her father is a Croat and her mother is a Serb. She calls herself a 'Bosnian'.

'You're a journalist,' Amer said, speaking to me in a flat voice. 'You can look at war, but you can never feel it in your skin.' Amer used to be a journalist too. He is now a construction worker, saving money to seek asylum somewhere, anywhere — 'maybe Germany, maybe Switzerland, maybe Austria' — to escape the war.

'I told her she must live, not because I want her to live,' he said, putting the letter in my hands. 'She must live because she must never give the Serbs the glory of killing her. And maybe... maybe years from now we will be together again.'

Criselda Yabes has been on a year's fellowship at the *Fondation Journalistes en Europe* in France. She previously worked in Manila as a correspondent for *Agence France Press*, *Associated Press* and *Reuters*, followed by freelance work for *Newsweek* and the *Washington Post*.



obeying a curfew.

I asked if the senior UN officials had taken any action concerning the reports.

'It's buried underground,' the officer told me.

'Do you know what that means?' asked the captain. I nodded. It meant the papers had been consigned to an obscure corner, waiting to gather dust on a shelf.

Politicians arriving regularly in Yugoslavia for 'assessment trips' leave without answers. Workers on the ground focus on short-term solutions, like handing out food to refugees.

'I'm solving hundreds of little problems every day but I don't have the overall solution to the problem,' said Anthony Land, head of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Sarajevo. 'It's a humanitarian problem, not a humanitarian solution,' he said. 'We're buying time for the politicians to come up with a solution'. And if there is still no solution in sight? 'We'll buy more time.'

Colonel Robert Bresse says there is a solution.

'The Serbs need a beating. We need to have planes up in the air and hit targets. If we don't interfere we will be here for 10 years.'

This is a French commander talking.

The ramrod Colonel Bresse, who is chief of the UNPROFOR infantry battalion in the Bihac Muslim 'pocket' says things that could get him into trouble with his superiors in Geneva. He says he doesn't care.

He holds court at his headquarters. His men adore him. He regularly entertains visitors and journalists in the officers' mess, with soldiers in uniform serving a wide selection of cheeses, St Emilion wine and roast chicken or hare. The chef must never run out of chocolates — they are the colonel's favourite.

He barely concealed his sympathy for the Muslims — or his disdain for the Serbs. He kept such thoughts to himself, however,

Egypt

THE Egyptian Government recently hired Saatchi and Saatchi to burnish the country's image abroad. But even Mrs Thatcher's ad men have not been able to rescue this year's tourist season in the face of attacks on foreign visitors by Muslim extremists.

Meanwhile the Government appears to be operating a 'shoot-to-kill' policy for suspected Islamic militants – not at all in keeping with Egypt's former reputation of being a country of relative freedom and openness. This, the most populous and militarily powerful Arab nation, was better known as a democratic trend-setter.

During the 1950s and 1960s President Nasser championed socialism and nationalized many Egyptian industries. But economic difficulties mounted, compounded by costs of the wars with Israel, and there was an about-face from socialism towards pro-American capitalism. After Nasser's assassination by Islamic fundamentalists his successors Sadat and Mubarak performed ideological somersaults and received US aid for making peace with Israel.

Many Egyptians are now weary of politicians' rhetoric and long for what only the wealthy can afford: clean water,



a house, a job and education for their children. Poverty is worst in the south where peasants and African Nubians receive few of the benefits found in Cairo and Alexandria.

During the free market 1980s, Egypt borrowed heavily. Though half its \$60 billion debt was erased for joining the Gulf

War coalition, repayment pressures are forcing cut-backs on food and fuel subsidies.

The free market's squeeze has also widened a rift between secular and religious that threatens to tear the country apart, mosque and at religious festivals. Islamic movements win converts with free clinics, food,

clothing and education. The most extreme groups are also waging armed struggle, killing leading secular figures and members of the country's relatively prosperous Coptic Christian community. The regime hopes to outwit the Islamic fundamentalists by being more religious than they are. But symbolic gestures like inserting daily prayers into TV broadcasts don't seem to be working.

With attacks near tourist attractions, fundamentalists are poised to derail Egypt's biggest money-maker. The security forces are clamping down and thousands of Muslim leaders languish in prison, many are subjected to torture.

Mubarak says less today about leading Egypt towards real democracy. The small opposition blocs frequently accuse the ruling party and army of fraud, graft and election-rigging.

Egyptians often say that the flow of the Nile for thousands of years has imbued their culture with patience and quiet determination. But as Muslims and Copts, rich and poor, liberals and authoritarians battle to shape their country's future that patience will be tested as never before.

Jill Hamburg

AT A glance

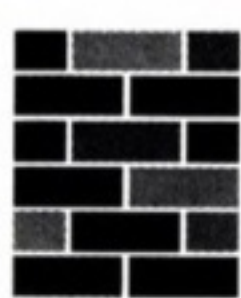
Excellent ★★★★★
Good ★★★★
Fair ★★★
Poor ★★
Appalling ★



INCOME DISTRIBUTION ★

Mercedes for some, but casual labourers only earn 30 US cents per day.

1982: ★★



SELF-RELIANCE ★★

Food imports and US \$31 billion debt.

1982: ★★



POSITION OF WOMEN ★★

Islamic fervour keeps women from work; paternalistic concern for women/children's welfare.

1982: ★★

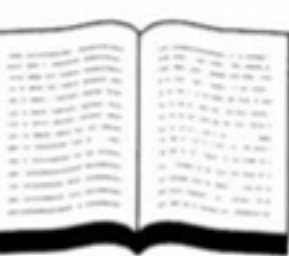


POLITICS

Regime is well to the right of centre.



1982



LITERACY ★★

59.6% for men, 30.2% for women. 90% attend primary school.

1982: ★★



FREEDOM ★★

New anti-terrorist laws and shoot-to-kill policies. Deteriorating human rights situation.

1982: ★★



LIFE EXPECTANCY ★★★

60 years (US 76 years)

1982: ★★

Leader President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak
Economy GNP per capita US \$640 (US \$21,790)
Main exports: Cotton textiles and raw cotton, oil and aluminium.

Main imports: Grains, meat, wood, paper, steel, cars, industrial and telecommunications equipment. Main foreign currency earners are oil, remittances from workers abroad, tourism and Suez canal tolls. Agriculture employs most people, growing wheat, maize/corn, tomatoes, sugar cane and rice; also some fishing and livestock production. 96 per cent of the land is desert.

People 53 million

Health Infant mortality 67 per 1,000 (US 9 per 1,000).

Culture Mediterranean Egyptians and Nubians in the south share a common national culture.

Religion: 90 per cent Muslim, mostly Sunni; also Coptic Christians, other Christians and Jews.

Languages: Arabic; Berber, Greek, Armenian, French and English also spoken.

Sources: Third World Guide 1993/4; World Bank Report 1992; The Middle East Review 1992.

Last profiled in November 1982

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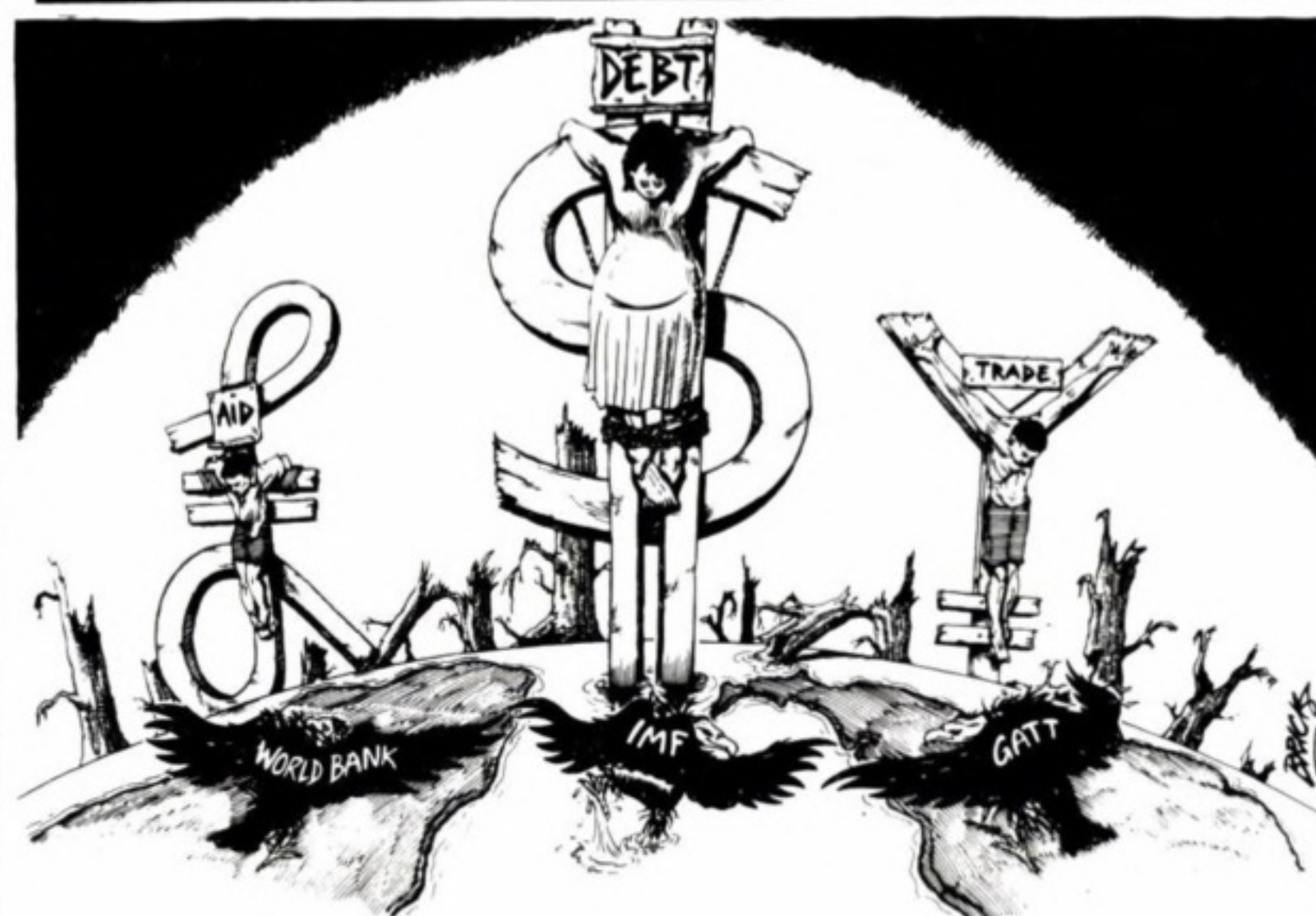
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